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Horace B. Pearson.

725 Spruce Street.



Lytton, Edward George

Earle Lytton - Bulwer-Lytton

1st Baron, 1803-1873

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THE
LADY OF LYONS;
OR,
LOVE AND PRIDE.

A Play

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL COVENT GARDEN.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF

“EUGENE ARAM,” “THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII,”
“RIENZI,” &c.

ELEVENTH EDITION.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1839.

LONDON:
Printed by W. Clowes and Sons,
14, Charing Cross.

TO
THE AUTHOR OF "ION,"

WHOSE GENIUS AND EXAMPLE HAVE ALIKE CONTRIBUTED

TOWARDS THE REGENERATION

OF

THE NATIONAL DRAMA,

THIS PLAY IS INSCRIBED.



P R E F A C E.

AN indistinct recollection of the very pretty little tale,—called “The Bellows-Mender,” suggested the plot of this Drama. The incidents are, however, greatly altered from those in the tale and the characters entirely re-cast. In the selection of the time in which the Play has been laid, I was guided, naturally and solely, by the wish to take that period in which the incidents might be rendered most probable, and in which the probationary career of the hero, in the Fifth Act,—might be sufficiently rapid for dramatic effect, and (on account of that very rapidity) in accordance with the ordinary character and events of the age. The early years of the first and most brilliant successes of the French Republic appeared to constitute the only epoch in which these objects could be attained. It was a period when, in the general ferment of society, and the brief equalization of ranks, Claude’s high-placed love, his ardent feelings, his unsettled principles,—the struggle between which makes the passion of this drama,—his ambition, and his career, were phenomena that characterised the time itself, and in which the spirit of the nation went along with the extravagance of the individual. In some respects, Claude Melnotte is a type of that restless, brilliant, and evanescent generation that sprung up from the ashes of the terrible Revolution,—men, born to be agents of the genius of Napoleon, to accomplish the most marvellous exploits, and to leave but little of permanent triumph and solid advantage to the succeeding race.

In selecting this period as one best suited to the development of a story which seemed to me rich in materials of dramatic interest, I can honestly say that I endeavoured, as much as possible, to avoid every political allusion applicable to our own time and land,—our own party prejudices and passions. How difficult a task this was, a reference to any Drama, in which the characters are supposed to live under Republican institutions, will prove! There is scarcely a single play, the scene of which is laid in Rome, in Greece, in Switzerland, wherein political allusions and political declamations are not carefully elaborated as the most striking and telling parts of the performance.*

The principal fault of this Play, as characteristic of the time, is, perhaps, indeed, the too cautious avoidance of all those references to Liberty and Equality in which, no doubt, every man living at that day would have hourly indulged. The old and classical sentiment, that virtue is nobility, contains the pith of the political creed announced by Claude Melnotte; and that sentiment is the founder, and often the motto, of Aristocracy itself. In fact, the enthusiasm of Claude is far more that of a soldier than a citizen;† and it is not the reasoner nor the politician,—but the man, with his feelings and his struggles,—with whom the audience sympathise, when he glories in the redemption of his name. It is perfectly clear that neither the English author nor the English audience can recognise much in harmony with their own sentiments, when Claudé declares that the gold he has won in the campaign in Italy “*is hallowed in the cause of nations!*” The question for us to consider is, not whether an Englishman or a philosopher would think that there was any sanctity in the principles of that brilliant war, but

* The noble Tragedy of “Ion” has for its very plot, its very catastrophe, almost its very moral, the abolition of Royalty and the establishment of a Republic;—yet no one would suspect Serjeant Talfourd of designing the overthrow of the British Constitution.

† The allusion to the rapidity of promotion in the French army was absolutely necessary to the conduct of the story; and, after all, it is expressed in language borrowed and adapted from that very jacobinical authority, Horatio Viscount Nelson. Nor is it easy to conceive how the sentiment—that merit, not money, should purchase promotion in the army—can be called a *Republican* doctrine; since, though it certainly did pervade the French Republican Army, it inculcates a principle far more common in Despotie Countries than under Free Institutions. We must look to the annals of the East for the most frequent examples of the rise of fortunate soldiers.

whether an enthusiastic soldier under Napoleon would not have believed it. Our national prepossessions and prejudices,—our closeness to an age, the false glitter of which we can so well detect—alike, I hope, guard us against all political infection from a play cast in a time when the coming shadow of a military despotism was already darkening the prospects of an unwise and weak Republic : and if there be anywhere the antipodes to the French Jacobin of the last century, it is the English Reformer of the present. For my own part, I never met with any one, however warm a lover of abstract liberty, who had a sympathy with the principles of the Directory and the Government of M. Barras. But enough in contradiction of a charge which the whole English public have ridiculed and scouted, and which has sought to introduce into the free domains of art all the miserable calumnies and wretched spleen of party hostilities.

The faults of the Play itself I do not seek to defend : such faults are the fair and just materials for criticism and cavil. I am perfectly aware that it is a very slight and trivial performance, and, being written solely for the Stage, may possess but a feeble interest in the closet. It was composed with a twofold object. In the first place, sympathising with the enterprise of Mr. Macready, as Manager of Covent Garden, and believing that many of the higher interests of the Drama were involved in the success or failure of an enterprise equally hazardous and disinterested, I felt, if I may so presume to express myself, something of the Brotherhood of Art ; and it was only for Mr. Macready to think it possible that I might serve him, to induce me to make the attempt.

Secondly, in that attempt I was mainly anxious to see whether or not certain critics had truly declared that it was not in my power to attain the art of dramatic construction and theatrical effect. I felt, indeed, that it was in this that a writer, accustomed to the narrative class of composition, would have the most both to learn and to *un*learn. Accordingly, it was to the development of the plot and the arrangement of the incidents that I directed my chief attention ;—and I sought to throw whatever belongs to poetry less into the diction and the ‘ felicity of words ’ than into the construction of the story, the creation of the characters, and

the spirit of the pervading sentiment. With this acknowledgment, may I hazard a doubt whether any more ornate or more elevated style of language would be so appropriate to the rank of the characters introduced, or would leave so clear and uninterrupted an effect to the strength and progress of that domestic interest, which (since I do not arrogate the entire credit of its invention) I may, perhaps, be allowed to call the chief attraction of the Play.

Having, on presenting this drama to the Theatre, confided the secret of its authorship to the Manager alone;—having, therefore, induced no party,—no single friend or favourer of my own,—to attend the early performances which decided its success,—I hope that on my side “The Lady of Lyons” has been fairly left to the verdict of the Public,—let me now also hope an equal fairness from those who wish to condemn the Politician in the Author. I have no intention of writing again for the Stage; and, therefore, so far as my own experiment is concerned, I have but little to hope or fear. Do not let those who love the literature of the Drama discourage other men, immeasurably more fitted to adorn it, solely because in a free country they may, like the Author of this Play, have ventured elsewhere to express political opinions.

E. L. B.

London, February 26, 1838.

THE LADY OF LYONS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Beauseant (*a rich gentleman of Lyons, in love with,
and refused by, Pauline Deschappelles*) . MR. ELTON.

Glavis (*his friend, also a rejected suitor to
Pauline*) MR. MEADOWS.

Colonel, afterwards General, Damas (*Cousin to
Madam Deschappelles, and an officer in the
French army*) MR. BARTLEY.

Monsieur Deschappelles (*a Lyonnese merchant,
father to Pauline*) MR. STRICKLAND.

Landlord of the Golden Lion MR. YARNOLD.

Gaspar. MR. DIDDEAR.

Claude Melnotte MR. MACREADY.

First Officer }
Second Officer } . . MESSRS. HOWE, PRITCHARD, AND ROBERTS.
Third Officer }

Servants, Notary, &c.

Madame Deschappelles MRS. CLIFFORD.

Pauline (*her daughter*) MISS HELEN FAUCIT.

The widow Melnotte (*mother to Claude*) MRS. GRIFFITH.

Janet (*the inn-keeper's daughter*) . . MRS. EAST.

Marian (*maid to Pauline*) MISS. GARRICK

Scene—Lyons and the neighbourhood.

Time, 1795—1798.

THE
LADY OF LYONS;

OR,
LOVE AND PRIDE.

ACT I.
SCENE I.

A room in the house of M. Deschappelles, at Lyons. Pauline reclining on a sofa; Marian, her Maid, fanning her.—Flowers and notes on a table beside the sofa.—Madame Deschappelles seated.—The Gardens are seen from the open window.

MADAME DESCHAP.

Marian, put that rose a little more to the left.—(*Marian alters the position of a rose in Pauline's hair.*)—Ah, so!—that improves the air,—the *tournure*,—the *je ne sais quoi*!—You are certainly very handsome, child!—quite my style;—I don't wonder that you make such a sensation!—Old, young, rich, and poor, do homage to the Beauty of Lyons?—Ah, we live again in our children,—especially when they have our eyes and complexion!

PAULINE (*languidly*).

Dear mother, you spoil your Pauline!—(*aside*) I wish I knew who sent me these flowers!

MADAME DESCHAP.

No, child!—if I praise you, it is only to inspire you with a proper ambition.—You are born to make a great marriage.—Beauty is valuable or worthless according as you invest the property to the best advantage.—Marian, go and order the carriage!
[*Exit Marian.*]

PAULINE.

Who *can* it be that sends me, every day, these beautiful flowers?—how sweet they are!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Monsieur Beauseant, madam.

MADAME DESCHAP.

Let him enter. Pauline, this is another offer!—I know it is!—Your father should engage an additional clerk to keep the account-book of your conquests.

Enter Beauseant.

BEAUSEANT.

Ah, ladies, how fortunate I am to find you at home!—*(aside)* How lovely she looks!—It is a great sacrifice I make in marrying into a family in trade!—they will be eternally grateful!—*(aloud)* Madame, you will permit me a word with your charming daughter.—*(Approaches Pauline, who rises disdainfully)*—Mademoiselle, I have ventured to wait upon you, in a hope that you must long since have divined. Last night, when you outshone all the beauty of Lyons, you completed your conquest over me! You know that my fortune is not exceeded by any estate in the Province,—you know that, but for the Revolution, which has defrauded me of my titles, I should be noble. May I, then, trust that you will not reject my alliance? I offer you my hand and heart.

PAULINE *(aside)*.

He has the air of a man who confers a favour!—*(aloud)* Sir, you are very condescending—I thank you humbly; but, being duly sensible of my own demerits, you must allow me to decline the honour you propose. *(Curtseys, and turns away.)*

BEAUSEANT.

Decline! impossible!—you are not serious!—Madame, suffer me to appeal to *you*. I am a suitor for your daughter's hand—the settlements shall be worthy her beauty and my station. May I wait on M. Deschappelles?

MADAME DESCHAP.

M. Deschappelles never interferes in the domestic arrangements,—you are very obliging. If you were still a Marquis, or if my daughter were intended to marry a commoner,—why perhaps, we might give you the preference.

BEAUSEANT.

A commoner!—we are all commoners in France now.

MADAME DESCHAP.

In France, yes; but there is a nobility still left in the other countries in Europe. We are quite aware of your good qua-

lities, and don't doubt that you will find some lady more suitable to your pretensions. We shall be always happy to see you as an acquaintance, M. Beauseant!—My dear child, the carriage will be here presently.

BEAUSEANT.

Say no more, Madame!—say no more!—(*aside*) Refused! and by a merchant's daughter!—refused! It will be all over Lyons before sunset!—I will go and bury myself in my chateau, study philosophy, and turn woman-hater. Refused! they ought to be sent to a madhouse!—Ladies, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning. [*Exit Beauseant.*]

MADAME DESCHAP.

How forward these men are!—I think, child, we kept up our dignity. Any girl, however inexperienced, knows how to accept an offer, but it requires a vast deal of address to refuse one with proper condescension and disdain. I used to practise it at school with the dancing-master!

Enter Damas.

DAMAS.

Good morning, cousin Deschappelles.—Well, Pauline, are you recovered from last night's ball?—So many triumphs must be very fatiguing. Even M. Glavis sighed most piteously when you departed; but that might be the effect of the supper.

PAULINE.

• M. Glavis, indeed!

MADAME DESCHAP.

M. Glavis?—as if my daughter would think of M. Glavis!

DAMAS.

Hey-day!—why not?—His father left him a very pretty fortune, and his birth is higher than yours, cousin Deschappelles. But perhaps you are looking to M. Beauseant,—his father was a Marquis before the Revolution.

PAULINE.

M. Beauseant,—Cousin, you delight in tormenting me!

MADAME DESCHAP.

Don't mind him, Pauline!—Cousin Damas, you have no susceptibility of feeling,—there is a certain indelicacy in all your ideas.—M. Beauseant knows already that he is no match for my daughter!

DAMAS.

Pooh! pooh! one would think you intended your daughter to marry a prince!

MADAME DESCHAP.

Well, and if I did?—what then?—Many a foreign prince—

DAMAS (*interrupting her*).

Foreign prince!—foreign fiddlestick!—you ought to be ashamed of such nonsense at your time of life.

MADAME DESCHAP.

My time of life!—That is an expression never applied to any lady till she is sixty-nine and three-quarters;—and only then by the clergyman of the parish.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Madame, the carriage is at the door. [*Exit Servant.*]

MADAME DESCHAP.

Come, child, put on your bonnet—you really have a very thorough-bred air—not at all like your poor father.—(*fondly*) Ah, you little coquette! when a young lady is always making mischief, it is a sure sign that she takes after her mother!

PAULINE.

Good day, cousin Damas—and a better humour to you—(*going back to the table and taking the flowers*). Who could have sent me these flowers?

[*Exeunt Pauline and Madame Deschappelles.*]

DAMAS.

That would be an excellent girl if her head had not been turned. I fear she is now become incorrigible! Zounds, what a lucky fellow I am to be still a bachelor! They may talk of the devotion of the sex—but the most faithful attachment in life is that of a woman in love—with herself! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The exterior of a small Village Inn—sign the Golden Lion—a few leagues from Lyons, which is seen at a distance.

BEAUSEANT (*behind the scenes*).

Yes, you may bait the horses, we shall rest here an hour.

Enter Beauseant and Glavis.

GLAVIS.

Really, my dear Beauseant, consider that I have promised to spend a day or two with you at your chateau—that I am quite at your mercy for my entertainment—and yet you are

as silent and as gloomy as a mute at a funeral, or an Englishman at a party of pleasure.

BEAUSEANT.

Bear with me!—the fact is that I am miserable.

GLAVIS.

You—the richest and gayest bachelor in Lyons?

BEAUSEANT.

It is because I am a bachelor that I am miserable.—Thou knowest Pauline—the only daughter of the rich merchant, Mons. Deschappelles?

GLAVIS.

Know her!—who does not?—as pretty as Venus, and as proud as Juno.

BEAUSEANT.

Her taste is worse than her pride—(*drawing himself up*). Know, Glavis, she has actually refused me!

GLAVIS (*aside*).

So she has me!—very consoling! In all cases of heart-ache, the application of another man's disappointment draws out the pain, and allays the irritation.—(*Aloud*) Refused you! and wherefore?

BEAUSEANT.

I know not, unless it be because the Revolution swept away my father's title of Marquis—and she will not marry a commoner. Now, as we have no noblemen left in France, as we are all citizens and equals, she can only hope that, in spite of the war, some English Milord or German Count will risk his life, by coming to Lyons and making her my Lady. Refused me, and with scorn!—By heaven, I'll not submit to it tamely—I'm in a perfect fever of mortification and rage.—Refuse me, indeed!

GLAVIS.

Be comforted, my dear fellow—I will tell you a secret. For the same reason she refused me!

BEAUSEANT.

You!—that's a very different matter! But give me your hand, Glavis—we'll think of some plan to humble her. By Jove, I should like to see her married to a strolling player!

Enter Landlord and his Daughter, from the Inn.

LANDLORD.

Your servant, citizen Beauseant—servant, Sir. Perhaps you

will take dinner before you proceed to your château; our larder is most plentifully supplied.

BEAUSEANT.

I have no appetite.

GLAVIS.

Nor I. Still it is bad travelling on an empty stomach. What have you got? (*Takes and looks over the bill of fare.*)

(*Shout without*)—"Long live the Prince!—Long live the Prince!"

BEAUSEANT.

The Prince!—what Prince is that? I thought we had no princes left in France.

LANDLORD.

Ha, ha! the lads always call him Prince. He has just won the prize in the shooting-match, and they are taking him home in triumph.

BEAUSEANT.

Him! and who's Mr. Him?

LANDLORD.

Who should he be, but the pride of the village, Claude Melnotte?—Of course you have heard of Claude Melnotte?

GLAVIS (*giving back the bill of fare*).

Never had that honour. Soup—ragout of hare—roast chicken, and, in short, all you have!

BEAUSEANT.

The son of old Melnotte, the gardener?

LANDLORD.

Exactly so—a wonderful young man.

BEAUSEANT.

How wonderful?—are his cabbages better than other people's?

LANDLORD.

Nay, he don't garden any more; his father left him well off. He's only a genus.

GLAVIS.

A what?

LANDLORD.

A genus!—a man who can do everything in life except anything that's useful;—that's a genus.

BEAUSEANT.

You raise my curiosity—proceed.

LANDLORD.

Well, then, about four years ago, old Melnotte died and left his son well to do in the world. We then all observed that a great change came over young Claude: he took to reading and Latin, and hired a professor from Lyons, who had so much in his head that he was forced to wear a great, full-bottom wig to cover it. Then he took a fencing-master, and a dancing-master, and a music-master; and then he learned to paint; and at last it was said that young Claude was to go to Paris, and set up for a painter. The lads laughed at him at first; but he is a stout fellow, is Claude, and as brave as a lion, and soon taught them to laugh the wrong side of their mouths; and now all the boys swear by him, and all the girls pray for him.

BEAUSEANT.

A promising youth, certainly! And why do they call him Prince?

LANDLORD.

Partly because he is at the head of them all, and partly because he has such a proud way with him, and wears such fine clothes—and, in short—looks like a prince.

BEAUSEANT.

And what could have turned the foolish fellow's brain? The Revolution, I suppose?

LANDLORD.

Yes—the Revolution that turns us all topsy-turvy—the revolution of Love.

BEAUSEANT.

Romantic young Corydon! And with whom is he in love?

LANDLORD.

Why—but it is a secret, gentlemen.

BEAUSEANT.

Oh! certainly.

LANDLORD.

Why, then, I hear from his mother, good soul! that it is no less a person than the Beauty of Lyons, Pauline Deschappelles.

BEAUSEANT AND GLAVIS.

Ha! ha!—Capital!

LANDLORD.

You may laugh, but it is as true as I stand here.

BEAUSEANT.

And what does the Beauty of Lyons say to his suit?

LANDLORD.

Lord, Sir, she never even condescended to look at him, though when he was a boy he worked in her father's garden.

BEAUSEANT.

Are you sure of that?

LANDLORD.

His mother says that Mademoiselle does not know him by sight.

BEAUSEANT (*taking Glavis aside*).

I have hit it,—I have it;—here is our revenge! Here is a prince for our haughty damsel. Do you take me?

GLAVIS.

Deuce take me if I do!

BEAUSEANT.

Blockhead!—it's as clear as a map. What if we could make this elegant clown pass himself off as a foreign prince?—lend him money, clothes, equipage for the purpose?—make him propose to Pauline?—marry Pauline? Would it not be delicious?

GLAVIS.

Ha! ha!—Excellent! But how shall we support the necessary expenses of his highness?

BEAUSEANT.

Pshaw! Revenge is worth a much larger sacrifice than a few hundred louis;—as for details, my valet is the trustiest fellow in the world, and shall have the appointment of his highness's establishment. Let's go to him at once, and see if he be really this Admirable Crichton.

GLAVIS.

With all my heart;—but the dinner?

BEAUSEANT.

Always thinking of dinner! Hark ye, Landlord, how far is it to young Melnotte's cottage? I should like to see such a prodigy.

LANDLORD.

Turn down the lane,—then strike across the common,—and you will see his mother's cottage.

BEAUSEANT.

True, he lives with his mother.—(*Aside*) We will not trust to an old woman's discretion; better send for him hither. I'll just step in and write him a note. Come, Glavis.

GLAVIS.

Yes,—Beauseant, Glavis, and Co., manufacturers of princes, wholesale and retail,—an uncommonly genteel line of business. But why so grave?

BEAUSEANT.

You think only of the sport,—I of the revenge.

[*Exeunt within the Inn.*]

SCENE III.

The Interior of Melnotte's Cottage; flowers placed here and there; a guitar on an oaken table, with a portfolio, &c.; a picture on an easel, covered by a curtain; fencing-foils crossed over the mantel-piece; an attempt at refinement in spite of the homeliness of the furniture, &c.; a staircase to the right conducts to the upper story.

(*Shout without*)—"Long live Claude Melnotte!" "Long live the Prince!"

THE WIDOW MELNOTTE.

Hark!—there's my dear son;—carried off the prize, I'm sure: and now he'll want to treat them all.

CLAUDE MELNOTTE (*opening the door*).

What! you won't come in, my friends! Well, well,—there's a trifle to make merry elsewhere. Good day to you all,—good day!

(*Shout*)—"Hurrah! Long live Prince Claude!"

Enter Claude Melnotte, with a rifle in his hand.

MELNOTTE.

Give me joy, dear mother! I've won the prize!—never missed one shot! Is it not handsome, this gun?

WIDOW.

Humph!—Well, what is it worth, Claude?

MELNOTTE.

Worth! What is a ribbon worth to a soldier? Worth!—everything! Glory is priceless!

WIDOW.

Leave glory to great folks. Ah! Claude, Claude, castles in the air cost a vast deal to keep up! How is all this to end? What good does it do thee to learn Latin, and sing songs, and play on the guitar, and fence, and dance, and paint pictures? All very fine; but what does it bring in?

MELNOTTE.

Wealth! wealth, my mother!—Wealth to the mind—wealth to the heart—high thoughts—bright dreams—the hope of fame—the ambition to be worthier to love Pauline.

WIDOW.

My poor son!—The young lady will never think of thee.

MELNOTTE.

Do the stars think of us? Yet if the prisoner see them shine into his dungeon, would'st thou bid him turn away from *their* lustre? Even so from this low cell, poverty,—I lift my eyes to Pauline and forget my chains.—(*Goes to the picture and draws aside the curtain.*) See, this is her image—painted from memory.—Oh, how the canvas wrongs her!—(*Takes up the brush and throws it aside.*) I shall never be a painter. I can paint no likeness but one, and that is above all art. I would turn soldier—France needs soldiers! But to leave the air that Pauline breathes! What is the hour?—so late? I will tell thee a secret, mother. Thou knowest that for the last six weeks I have sent every day the rarest flowers to Pauline?—she wears them. I have seen them on her breast. Ah, and then the whole universe seemed filled with odours! I have now grown more bold—I have poured my worship into poetry—I have sent the verses to Pauline—I have signed them with my own name. My messenger ought to be back by this time? I bade him wait for the answer.

WIDOW.

And what answer do you expect, Claude?

MELNOTTE.

That which the Queen of Navarre sent to the poor troubadour:—"Let me see the Oracle that can tell nations I am beautiful!" She will admit me. I shall hear her speak—I shall meet her eyes—I shall read upon her cheek the sweet thoughts that translate themselves into blushes. Then—then, oh, then—she may forget that I am the peasant's son!

WIDOW.

Nay, if she will but hear thee talk, Claude?

MELNOTTE.

I foresee it all. She will tell me that desert is the true rank. She will give me a badge—a flower—a glove! Oh rapture! I shall join the armies of the Republic—I shall rise—I shall win a name that beauty will not blush to hear. I shall return with the right to say to her—"See, how love does not level the proud, but raise the humble!" Oh, how my heart swells

within me!—Oh, what glorious Prophets of the Future are Youth and Hope! (*Knock at the door.*)

WIDOW.

Come in.

Enter Gaspar.

MELNOTTE.

Welcome, Gaspar, welcome. Where is the letter? Why do you turn away, man? where is the letter? (*Gaspar gives him one.*) This! This is mine, the one I entrusted to thee. Didst thou not leave it?

GASPAR.

Yes, I left it.

MELNOTTE.

My own verses returned to me. Nothing else?

GASPAR.

Thou wilt be proud to hear how thy messenger was honoured. For thy sake, Melnotte,—I have borne that which no Frenchman can bear without disgrace.

MELNOTTE.

Disgrace, Gaspar! Disgrace?

GASPAR.

I gave thy letter to the porter, who passed it from lackey to lackey till it reached the lady it was meant for.

MELNOTTE.

It reached her, then;—you are sure of that? It reached her,—well, well!

GASPAR.

It reached her, and was returned to me with blows. Dost hear, Melnotte? with blows! Death! are we slaves still, that we are to be thus dealt with, we peasants?

MELNOTTE.

With blows? No, Gaspar, no; not blows!

GASPAR.

I could show thee the marks if it were not so deep a shame to bear them. The lackey who tossed thy letter into the mire swore that his lady and her mother never were so insulted. What could thy letter contain, Claude?

MELNOTTE (*looking over the letter*).

Not a line that a serf might not have written to an empress. No, not one.

GASPAR.

They promise thee the same greeting they gave me, if thou wilt pass that way. Shall we endure this, Claude?

MELNOTTE (*wringing Gaspar's hand*).

Forgive me, the fault was mine, I have brought this on thee; I will not forget it; thou shalt be avenged! The heartless insolence!

GASPAR.

Thou art moved, Melnotte; think not of me; I would go through fire and water to serve thee; but,—a blow! It is not the *bruise* that galls,—it is the *blush*, Melnotte.

MELNOTTE.

Say, what message?—How insulted?—Wherefore?—What the offence?

GASPAR.

Did you not write to Pauline Deschappelles, the daughter of the rich merchant?

MELNOTTE.

Well?—

GASPAR.

And are you not a peasant—a gardener's son?—that was the offence. Sleep on it, Melnotte. Blows to a French citizen, blows! [Exit.]

WIDOW.

Now you are cured, Claude!

MELNOTTE (*tearing the letter*).

So do I scatter her image to the winds—I will stop her in the open streets—I will insult her—I will beat her menial ruffians—I will——(*Turns suddenly to Widow.*) Mother, am I hump-backed—deformed—hideous?

WIDOW.

You!

MELNOTTE.

A coward—a thief—a liar?

WIDOW.

You!

MELNOTTE.

Or a dull fool—a vain, drivelling, brainless idiot?

WIDOW.

No, no.

MELNOTTE.

What am I then—worse than all these? Why, I am a peasant! What has a peasant to do with love? Vain Re-

volutions, why lavish your cruelty on the great? Oh that we—we, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, had been swept away, so that the proud might learn what the world would be without us!—
(*Knock at the door.*)

Enter Servant from the Inn.

SERVANT.

A letter for Citizen Melnotte.

MELNOTTE.

A letter! from her perhaps—who sent thee?

SERVANT.

Why, Monsieur—I mean Citizen—Beauseant, who stops to dine at the Golden Lion, on his way to his chateau.

MELNOTTE.

Beauseant!—(*Reads.*)

“Young man, I know thy secret—thou lovest above thy station: if thou hast wit, courage, and discretion, I can secure to thee the realization of thy most sanguine hopes; and the sole condition I ask in return is, that thou shalt be steadfast to thine own ends. I shall demand from thee a solemn oath to marry her-whom thou lovest; to bear her to thine home on thy wedding night. I am serious—if thou would'st learn more, lose not a moment, but follow the bearer of this letter to thy friend and patron,—“CHARLES BEAUSEANT.”

MELNOTTE.

Can I believe my eyes? Are our own passions the sorcerers that raise up for us spirits of good or evil? I will go instantly.

WIDOW.

What is this Claude?

MELNOTTE.

“Marry her whom thou lovest”—“bear her to thine own home”—O, revenge and love; which of you is the strongest?—(*Gazing on the picture*) Sweet face, thou smilest on me from the canvas: weak fool that I am, do I then love her still? No, it is the vision of my own romance that I have worshipped: it is the reality, to which I bring scorn for scorn.—Adieu, mother; I will return anon. My brain reels—the earth swims before me.—(*Looks again at the letter*) No, it is not a mockery; I do not dream!
[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Gardens of M. Deschappelles' House, at Lyons—the House seen at the back of the Stage.

Enter Beauseant and Glavis.

BEAUSEANT.

Well, what think you of my plot? Has it not succeeded to a miracle? The instant that I introduced His Highness the Prince of Como to the pompous mother and the scornful daughter, it was all over with them: he came—he saw—he conquered: and, though it is not many days since he arrived, they have already promised him the hand of Pauline.

GLAVIS.

It is lucky, though, that you told them his Highness travelled incognito, for fear the Directory (who are not very fond of princes) should lay him by the heels; for he has a wonderful wish to keep up his rank, and scatters our gold about with as much coolness as if he were watering his own flower-pots.

BEAUSEANT.

True, he is damnably extravagant; I think the sly dog does it out of malice. However, it must be owned that he reflects credit on his loyal subjects, and makes a very pretty figure in his fine clothes, with my diamond snuff-box—

GLAVIS.

And my diamond ring! But do you think he will be firm to the last? I fancy I see symptoms of relenting: he will never keep up his rank, if he once let out his conscience.

BEAUSEANT.

His oath binds him; he cannot retract without being forsworn, and those low fellows are always superstitious! But, as it is, I tremble lest he be discovered: that bluff Colonel Damas (Madame Deschappelles' cousin) evidently suspects him: we must make haste and conclude the farce: I have thought of a plan to end it this very day.

GLAVIS.

This very day! Poor Pauline! her dream will be soon over.

BEAUSEANT.

Yes, this day they shall be married; this evening, according

to his oath, he shall carry his bride to the Golden Lion, and then pomp, equipage, retinue, and title, all shall vanish at once; and her Highness the Princess shall find that she has refused the son of a Marquis, to marry the son of a Gardener.—Oh, Pauline! once loved, now hated, yet still not relinquished, thou shalt drain the cup to the dregs,—thou shalt know what it is to be humbled!

Enter, from the House, Melnotte as the Prince of Como, leading in Pauline; Madame Deschappelles fanning herself; and Colonel Damas.

(Beauseant and Glavis bow respectfully. Pauline and Melnotte walk apart.)

MADAME DESCHAP.

Good morning, gentlemen; really I am so fatigued with laughter; the dear Prince is so entertaining. What wit he has! Any one may see that he has spent his whole life in courts.

DAMAS.

And what the deuce do you know about courts, cousin Deschappelles? You women regard men just as you buy books—you never care what is in them, but how they are bound and lettered. S'death, I don't think you would even look at your Bible if it had not a title to it.

MADAME DESCHAP.

How coarse you are, cousin Damas!—quite the manners of a barrack—you don't deserve to be one of our family; really we must drop your acquaintance when Pauline marries. I cannot patronise any relations that would discredit my future son-in-law, the Prince of Como.

MELNOTTE (*advancing*).

These are beautiful gardens, Madame, (*Beauseant and Glavis retire*)—who planned them?

MADAME DESCHAP.

A gardener named Melnotte, your Highness—an honest man who knew his station. I can't say as much for his son—a presuming fellow, who—ha! ha!—actually wrote verses—such doggrel!—to my daughter.

PAULINE.

Yes—how you would have laughed at them, Prince!—*you* who write such beautiful verses!

MELNOTTE.

This Melnotte must be a monstrous impudent person!

DAMAS.

Is he good-looking ?

MADAME DESCHAP.

I never notice such *canaille*—an ugly, mean-looking clown, if I remember right.

DAMAS.

Yet I heard your porter say he was wonderfully like his Highness.

MELNOTTE (*taking snuff*).

You are complimentary.

MADAME DESCHAP.

For shame, cousin Damas !—like the Prince, indeed !

PAULINE.

Like you ! Ah, mother, like our beautiful Prince ! I'll never speak to you again, cousin Damas.

MELNOTTE (*aside*).

Humph !—rank is a great beautifier ! I never passed for an Apollo while I was a peasant ; if I am so handsome as a prince, what should I be as an emperor ?—(*aloud*) Monsieur Beauseant, will you honour me ? (*offers snuff*.)

BEAUSEANT.

No, your Highness ; I have no small vices.

MELNOTTE.

Nay, if it were a vice you'd be sure to have it, Monsieur Beauseant.

MADAME DESCHAP. .

Ha ! ha !—how very severe !—what wit !

BEAUSEANT (*in a rage and aside*).

Curse his impertinence !

MADAME DESCHAP.

What a superb snuff-box !

PAULINE.

And what a beautiful ring !

MELNOTTE.

You like the box—a trifle—interesting perhaps from associations—a present from Louis XIV. to my great-great-grand-mother. Honour me by accepting it.

BEAUSEANT (*plucking him by the sleeve*).

How !—what the devil ! My box—are you mad ? It is worth five hundred louis.

MELNOTTE (*unheeding him, and turning to Pauline*).

And you like this ring? Ah, it has, indeed, a lustre since your eyes have shone on it (*placing it on her finger*). Henceforth hold me, sweet enchantress, the Slave of the Ring.

GLAVIS (*pulling him*).

Stay, stay—what are you about? My maiden aunt's legacy—a diamond of the first water. You shall be hanged for swindling, Sir.

MELNOTTE (*pretending not to hear*).

It is curious, this ring; it is the one with which my grandfather, the Doge of Venice, married the Adriatic!

(*Madame and Pauline examine the ring.*)

MELNOTTE (*to Beauseant and Glavis*).

Fie, gentlemen, princes must be generous?—(*Turns to Damas, who watches them closely.*) These kind friends have my interest so much at heart, that they are as careful of my property as if it were their own!

BEAUSEANT AND GLAVIS (*confusedly*).

Ha! ha!—very good joke that!

(*Appear to remonstrate with Melnotte in dumb show.*)

DAMAS.

What's all that whispering? I am sure there is some juggle here: hang me, if I think he is an Italian after all. Gad! I'll try him. *Servitore umillissimo, Eccellenza.**

MELNOTTE.

Hum—what does he mean, I wonder?

DAMAS.

Godo di vedervi in buona salute.†

MELNOTTE.

Hem—hem!

DAMAS.

Fa bel tempo—che si dice di nuovo?‡

MELNOTTE.

Well, Sir, what's all that gibberish?

DAMAS.

Oh, oh!—only Italian, your Highness!—The Prince of Como does not understand his own language!

MELNOTTE.

Not as you pronounce it,—who the deuce could?

* Your Excellency's most humble servant.

† I am glad to see you in good health.

‡ Fine Weather! What news is there?

MADAME DESCHAP.

Ha! ha! cousin Damas, never pretend to what you don't know.

PAULINE.

Ha! ha! cousin Damas; *you* speak Italian, indeed! (*makes a mocking gesture at him.*)

BEAUSEANT (*to Glavis*).

Clever dog!—how ready!

GLAVIS.

Ready, yes; with my diamond ring!—Damn his readiness!

DAMAS.

Laugh at me!—laugh at a Colonel in the French army!—The fellow's an impostor; I know he is. I'll see if he understands fighting as well as he does Italian.—(*Goes up to him, and aside*). Sir, you are a jackanapes!—Can you construe that?

MELNOTTE.

No, Sir; I never construe affronts in the presence of ladies; by-and-by I shall be happy to take a lesson—or give one.

DAMAS.

I'll find the occasion, never fear!

MADAME DESCHAP.

Where are you going, cousin?

DAMAS.

To correct my Italian. [*Exit.*]

BEAUSEANT (*to Glavis*).

Let us after, and pacify him; he evidently suspects something.

GLAVIS.

Yes!—but my diamond ring!

BEAUSEANT.

And my box!—We are over-taxed, fellow-subject!—we must stop the supplies, and dethrone the Prince

GLAVIS.

Prince!—he ought to be heir-apparent to King Stork!

[*Exeunt Beauseant and Glavis.*]

MADAME DESCHAP.

Dare I ask your Highness to forgive my cousin's insufferable vulgarity?

PAULINE.

Oh, yes!—you will forgive his manner for the sake of his heart.

MELNOTTE.

And the sake of his cousin.—Ah, Madame, there is one comfort in rank,—we are so sure of our position that we are not easily affronted. Besides, M. Damas has bought the right of indulgence from his friends, by never showing it to his enemies.

PAULINE.

Ah ! he is, indeed, as brave in action as he is rude in speech. He rose from the ranks to his present grade,—and in two years !

MELNOTTE.

In two years !—two years, did you say ?

MADAME DESCHAP. (*aside*).

I don't like leaving girls alone with their lovers ; but, with a prince, it would be so ill-bred to be prudish. [*Exit*.

MELNOTTE.

You can be proud of your connexion with one who owes his position to merit,—not birth.

PAULINE.

Why, yes ; but still—

MELNOTTE.

Still what, Pauline ?

PAULINE.

There is something glorious in the Heritage of Command. A man who has ancestors is like a Representative of the Past.

MELNOTTE.

True ; but, like other representatives, nine times out of ten he is a silent member. Ah, Pauline ! not to the Past, but to the Future, looks true nobility, and finds its blazon in posterity.

PAULINE.

You say this to please me, who have no ancestors ; but you, Prince, must be proud of so illustrious a race !

MELNOTTE.

No, no ! I would not, were I fifty times a prince, be a pensioner on the Dead ! I honour birth and ancestry when they are regarded as the incentives to exertion, not the title-deeds to sloth ! I honour the laurels that overshadow the graves of our fathers ;—it is our fathers I emulate, when I desire that beneath the evergreen I myself have planted my own ashes may repose ! Dearest ! could'st thou but see with my eyes !

PAULINE.

I cannot forego pride when I look on thee, and think that

thou lovest me. Sweet Prince, tell me again of thy palace by the Lake of Como; it is so pleasant to hear of thy splendours since thou didst swear to me that they would be desolate without Pauline; and when thou describest them, it is with a mocking lip and a noble scorn, as if custom had made thee disdain greatness.

MELNOTTE.

Nay, dearest, nay, if thou would'st have me paint
The home to which, could Love fulfil its prayers,
This hand would lead thee, listen !*—a deep vale
Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world;
Near a clear lake, margined by fruits of gold
And whispering myrtles; glassing softest skies
As cloudless, save with rare and roseate shadows,
As I would have thy fate !

PAULINE.

My own dear love !

MELNOTTE.

A palace lifting to eternal summer
Its marble walls, from out a glossy bower
Of coolest foliage musical with birds,
Whose songs should syllable thy name ! At noon
We'd sit beneath the arching vines, and wonder
Why Earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens
Still left us youth and love ! We'd have no friends
That were not lovers ; no ambition, save
To excel them all in love ; we'd read no books
That were not tales of love—that we might smile
To think how poorly eloquence of words
Translates the poetry of hearts like ours !
And when night came, amidst the breathless Heavens
We'd guess what star should be our home when love
Becomes immortal ; while the perfumed light
Stole through the mists of alabaster lamps,
And every air was heavy with the sighs
Of orange groves and music from sweet lutes,
And murmurs of low fountains that gush forth
I' the midst of roses !—Dost thou like the picture ?

* The reader will observe that Melnotte evades the request of Pauline. He proceeds to describe a home, which he does not say he possesses, but to which he would lead her, "*could Love fulfil its prayers.*" This caution is intended as a reply to a sagacious critic who censures the description, because it is not an exact and prosaic inventory of the characteristics of the Lake of Como !—When Melnotte, for instance, talks of birds "that syllable the name of Pauline," (by the way a literal translation from an Italian poet,) he is not thinking of ornithology, but probably of the Arabian Nights. He is venting the extravagant, but natural enthusiasm, of the Poet and the Lover.

PAULINE.

Oh ! as the bee upon the flower, I hang
Upon the honey of thy eloquent tongue !
Am I not blest ? And if I love too wildly,
Who would not love thee like Pauline ?

MELNOTTE (*bitterly*).

Oh, false one !

It is the *prince* thou lovest, not the *man* ;
If in the stead of luxury, pomp, and power,
I had painted poverty, and toil, and care,
Thou hadst found no honey on my tongue ;—Pauline,
That is not love !

PAULINE.

Thou wrong'st me, cruel Prince !

'Tis true I might not at the first been won,
Save through the weakness of a flattered pride ;
But *now*,—Oh ! trust me,—could'st thou fall from power,
And sink—

MELNOTTE.

As low as that poor gardener's son
Who dared to lift his eyes to thee.

PAULINE.

Even then,

Methinks thou would'st be only made more dear
By the sweet thought that I could prove how deep
Is woman's love ! We are like the insects, caught
By the poor glittering of a garish flame ;
But, oh, the wings once scorched,—the brightest star
Lures us no more ; and by the fatal light
We cling till death !

MELNOTTE.

Angel !

(*Aside*) O conscience ! conscience !

It must not be ;—her love hath grown a torture
Worse than her hate. I will at once to Beauseant,
And—ha ! he comes.—Sweet love, one moment leave me.
I have business with these gentlemen—I—I
Will forthwith join you.

PAULINE.

Do not tarry long !

[*Exit.**Enter Beauseant and Glavis.*

MELNOTTE.

Release me from my oath,—I will not marry her !

BEAUSEANT.

Then thou art perjured.

MELNOTTE.

No, I was not in my senses when I swore to thee to marry her! I was blind to all but her scorn!—deaf to all but my passion and my rage! Give me back my poverty and my honour!

BEAUSEANT.

It is too late,—you must marry her! and this day. I have a story already coined,—and sure to pass current. This Damas suspects thee,—he will set the police to work;—thou wilt be detected—Pauline will despise and execrate thee—Thou wilt be sent to the common gaol as a swindler.

MELNOTTE.

Fiend!

BEAUSEANT.

And in the heat of the girl's resentment (you know of what resentment is capable) and the parent's shame, she will be induced to marry the first that offers—even perhaps your humble servant.

MELNOTTE.

You! No; that were worse—for thou hast no mercy! I will marry her—I will keep my oath. Quick, then, with the damnable invention thou art hatching;—quick, if thou would'st not have me strangle thee or myself.

GLAVIS.

What a tiger! Too fierce for a Prince; he ought to have been the Grand Turk.

BEAUSEANT.

Enough—I will despatch; be prepared.

[Exeunt Beauseant and Glavis.]

Enter Damas with two swords.

DAMAS.

Now, then, Sir, the ladies are no longer your excuse. I have brought you a couple of dictionaries; let us see if your Highness can find out the Latin for *bilbo*.

MELNOTTE.

Away, Sir!—I am in no humour for jesting.

DAMAS.

I see you understand something of the grammar; you decline the noun substantive “small sword” with great ease; but that won't do—you must take a lesson in *parsing*.

MELNOTTE.

Fool!

DAMAS.

Sir,—a man who calls me a fool insults the lady who bore me; there's no escape for you—fight you shall, or——

MELNOTTE.

Oh, enough! enough!—take your ground.

(They fight; Damas is disarmed. Melnotte takes up the sword and returns it to Damas respectfully.)

A just punishment to the brave soldier who robs the State of its best property—the sole right to his valour and his life.

DAMAS.

Sir, you fence exceedingly well; you must be a man of honour—I don't care a jot whether you are a prince; but a man who has carte and tierce at his fingers' ends must be a gentleman.

MELNOTTE (*aside*).

Gentleman! Ay, I was a gentleman before I turned conspirator; for honest men are the gentlemen of Nature! Colonel, they tell me you rose from the ranks.

DAMAS.

I did.

MELNOTTE.

And in two years?

DAMAS.

It is true; that's no wonder in our army at present. Why the oldest general in the service is scarcely thirty, and we have some of two-and-twenty.

MELNOTTE.

Two-and-twenty!

DAMAS.

Yes; in the French army, now-a-days, promotion is not a matter of purchase. We are all heroes because we may be all generals. We have no fear of the cypress because we may all hope for the laurel.

MELNOTTE.

A general at two-and-twenty (*turning away*).—Sir, I may ask you a favour one of these days.

DAMAS.

Sir, I shall be proud to grant it. It is astonishing how much I like a man after I've fought with him.—(*Hides the swords.*)

Enter Madame and Beuseant.

MADAME DESCHAP.

Oh, Prince!—Prince!—What do I hear? You must fly, you must quit us!

MELNOTTE.

I!—

BEAUSEANT.

Yes, Prince; read this letter, just received from my friend at Paris, one of the Directory; they suspect you of designs against the Republic; they are very suspicious of princes, and your family take part with the Austrians. Knowing that I introduced your Highness at Lyons, my friend writes to me to say that you must quit the town immediately, or you will be arrested,—thrown into prison,—perhaps guillotined! Fly!—I will order horses to your carriage instantly. Fly to Marseilles; there you can take ship to Leghorn.

MADAME DESCHAP.

And what's to become of Pauline? Am I not to be mother to a princess, after all?

Enter Pauline and M. Deschappelles.

PAULINE (*throwing herself into Melnotte's arms*).

You must leave us!—Leave Pauline!

BEAUSEANT.

Not a moment is to be wasted.

MONS. DESCHAP.

I will go to the magistrates and inquire——

BEAUSEANT.

Then he is lost; the magistrates, hearing he is suspected, will order his arrest.

MADAME DESCHAP.

And I shall not be Princess Dowager!

BEAUSEANT.

Why not? There is only one thing to be done:—send for the priest—let the marriage take place at once, and the Prince carry home a bride!

MELNOTTE.

Impossible!—(*aside*) Villain!—I know not what I say.

MADAME DESCHAP.

What, lose my child?

BEAUSEANT.

And gain a Princess!

MADAME DESCHAP.

Oh, Monsieur Beauseant, you are so very kind, it must be so,—we ought not to be selfish, my daughter's happiness is at stake. She will go away, too, in a carriage and six!

PAULINE.

Thou art here still,—I cannot part from thee,—my heart will break.

MELNOTTE.

But thou wilt not consent to this hasty union,—thou wilt not wed an outcast—a fugitive.

PAULINE.

Ah! If thou art in danger, who should share it but Pauline?

MELNOTTE (*aside*).

Distraction!—If the earth could swallow me!

MONS. DESCHAP.

Gently! gently! The settlements—the contracts—my daughter's dowry!

MELNOTTE.

The dowry!—I am not base enough for that; no, not one farthing!

BEAUSEANT (*to Madame*).

Noble fellow!—Really your good husband is too mercantile in these matters. Monsieur Deschappelles, you hear his Highness: we can arrange the settlements by proxy; 'tis the way with people of quality.

MONS. DESCHAP.

But——

MADAME DESCHAP.

Hold your tongue!—Don't expose yourself!

BEAUSEANT.

I will bring the priest in a trice. Go in all of you and prepare; the carriage shall be at the door before the ceremony is over.

MADAME DESCHAP.

Be sure there are six horses, Beauseant! You are very good to have forgiven us for refusing you; but you see—a prince!

BEAUSEANT.

And such a prince! Madame, I cannot blush at the success of so illustrious a rival.—(*aside*) Now will I follow them to the village—enjoy my triumph, and to-morrow, in the hour

of thy shame and grief, I think, proud girl, thou wilt prefer even these arms to those of the gardener's son.

[*Exit Beauseant.*]

MADAME DESCHAP.

Come, Monsieur Deschappelles, give your arm to her Highness that is to be.

MONS. DESCHAP.

I don't like doing business in such a hurry; 'tis not the way with the house of Deschappelles and Co.

MADAME DESCHAP.

There, now, you fancy you are in the counting-house, don't you? (*pushes him to Pauline*).

MELNOTTE.

Stay, stay, Pauline—one word. Have you no scruple, no fear? Speak—it is not yet too late.

PAULINE.

When I loved thee, thy fate became mine. Triumph or danger—joy or sorrow—I am by thy side.

DAMAS.

Well, well, Prince, thou art a lucky man to be so loved. She is a good little girl in spite of her foibles—make her as happy as if she were not to be a princess (*slapping him on the shoulder*). Come, Sir, I wish you joy—young—tender—lovely;—zounds, I envy you!

MELNOTTE (*who has stood apart in gloomy abstraction*).

DO YOU? *

* On the stage the following lines are added:—

“Do you? Wise judges are we of each other.

“Woo, wed, and bear her home!” So runs the bond

To which I sold myself—and then—what then?

Away!—I will not look beyond the Hour.

Like children in the dark, I dare not face

The shades that gather round me in the distance.

You envy me—I thank you—you may read

My joy upon my brow—I thank you, Sir!

If hearts had audible language, you would hear

What mine would answer when you talk of *envy*!

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Exterior of the Golden Lion—time, twilight. The moon rises during the Scene.

Enter Landlord and his Daughter from the Inn.

LANDLORD.

Ha—ha—ha! Well, I never shall get over it. Our Claude is a prince with a vengeance now. His carriage breaks down at my inn—ha—ha!

JANET.

And what airs the young lady gives herself! "Is this the best room you have, young woman?" with such a toss of the head!

LANDLORD.

Well, get in, Janet; get in and see to the supper: the servants must sup before they go back.

[Exeunt Landlord and Janet.]

Enter Beauseant and Glavis.

BEAUSEANT.

You see our Princess is lodged at last—one stage more, and she'll be at her journey's end—the beautiful palace at the foot of the Alps!—ha—ha!

GLAVIS.

Faith, I pity the poor Pauline—especially if she's going to sup at the Golden Lion (*makes a wry face*). I shall never forget that cursed ragout.

Enter Melnotte from the Inn.

BEAUSEANT.

Your servant, my Prince; you reigned most worthily. I condole with you on your abdication. I am afraid that your Highness's retinue are not very faithful servants. I think they will quit you in the moment of your fall—'tis the fate of greatness. But you are welcome to your fine clothes—also the diamond snuff-box, which Louis XIV. gave to your great-grandmother.

GLAVIS.

And the ring, with which your grandfather the Doge of Venice married the Adriatic.

MELNOTTE.

I have kept my oath, gentlemen, say—have I kept my oath?

BEAUSEANT.

Most religiously.

MELNOTTE.

Then you have done with me and mine—away with you!

BEAUSEANT.

How, knave?

MELNOTTE.

Look you, our bond is over. Proud conquerors that we are, we have won the victory over a simple girl—compromised her honour—embittered her life—blasted, in their very blossoms, all the flowers of her youth. This is your triumph,—it is my shame! (*Turns to Beauseant*) Enjoy thy triumph, but not in my sight. I *was* her betrayer—I *am* her protector! Cross but her path—one word of scorn, one look of insult—nay, but one quiver of that mocking lip, and I will teach thee that bitter word thou hast graven eternally in this heart—*Repentance!*

BEAUSEANT.

His Highness is most grandiloquent.

MELNOTTE.

Highness me no more. Beware! Remorse has made me a new being. Away with you! There is danger in me. Away!

GLAVIS (*aside*).

He's an awkward fellow to deal with: come away, Beauseant.

BEAUSEANT.

I know the respect due to rank. Adieu, my Prince. Any commands at Lyons? Yet hold—I promised you 200 louis on your wedding-day; here they are.

MELNOTTE (*dashing the purse to the ground*).

I gave you revenge, I did not sell it. Take up your silver Judas; take it.—Ay, it is fit you should learn to stoop.

BEAUSEANT.

You will beg my pardon for this some day. (*Aside to Glavis*) Come to my chateau—I shall return hither to-morrow to learn how Pauline likes her new dignity.

MELNOTTE.

Are you not gone yet?

BEAUSEANT.

Your Highness's ~~most~~ obedient, most faithful—

GLAVIS.

And most humble servants. Ha! ha!

[*Exeunt Beauseant and Glavis.*]

MELNOTTE.

Thank Heaven, I had no weapon, or I should have slain them. Wretch! what can I say? Where turn? On all sides mockery—the very boors within—(*Laughter from the inn.*)—Sdeath, if even in this short absence the exposure should have chanced. I will call her. We will go hence. I have already sent one I can trust to my mother's house. There at least none can insult her agony—gloat upon her shame! There alone must she learn what a villain she has sworn to love.

(*As he turns to the door, enter Pauline from the Inn.*)

PAULINE.

Ah, my Lord, what a place! I never saw such rude people. They stare and wink so. I think the very sight of a prince, though he travels incognito, turns their honest heads. What a pity the carriage should break down in such a spot! You are not well—the drops stand on your brow—your hand is feverish.

MELNOTTE.

Nay, it is but a passing spasm; the air—

PAULINE.

Is not the soft air of your native south.

PAULINE.

How pale he is!—indeed thou art not well.
Where are our people? I will call them.

MELNOTTE.

Hold!

I—I am well.

PAULINE.

Thou art!—Ah! now I know it.
Thou fanciest, my kind Lord—I know thou dost—
Thou fanciest these rude walls, these rustic gossips,
Brick'd floors, sour wine, coarse viands, vex Pauline;
And so they might, but thou art by my side,
And I forget all else.

Enter Landlord, the servants peeping and laughing over his shoulder.

LANDLORD.

My Lord—your Highness—
Will your most noble Excellency choose—

MELNOTTE.

Begone, Sir!

[*Exit Landlord, laughing.*]

PAULINE.

How could they have learn'd thy rank ?
 One's servants are so vain !—nay, let it not
 Chafe thee, sweet Prince !—a few short days, and we
 Shall see thy palace by its lake of silver,
 And—nay, nay, Spendthrift, is thy wealth of smiles
 Already drained, or dost thou play the miser ?

MELNOTTE.

Thine eyes would call up smiles in deserts, fair one.
 Let us escape these rustics. Close at hand
 There is a cot, where I have bid prepare
 Our evening lodgment—a rude, homely roof,
 But honest, where our welcome will not be
 Made torture by the vulgar eyes and tongues
 That are as death to Love ! A heavenly night !
 The wooing air and the soft moon invite us.
 Wilt walk ? I pray thee, now,—I know the path,
 Ay, every inch of it !

PAULINE.

What, *thou* ! methought
 Thou wert a stranger in these parts. Ah ! truant,
 Some village beauty lured thee ;—thou art now
 Grown constant.

MELNOTTE.

Trust me.

PAULINE.

Princes are so changeful !

MELNOTTE.

Come, dearest, come.

PAULINE.

Shall I not call our people
 To light us ?

MELNOTTE.

Heaven will lend its stars for torches !
 It is not far.

PAULINE.

The night breeze chills me.

MELNOTTE.

Nay,
 Let me thus mantle thee ;—it is not cold.

PAULINE.

Never beneath thy smile !

MELNOTTE (*aside*).

Oh, Heaven ! forgive me ! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Melnotte's cottage—Widow bustling about—A table spread for supper.

WIDOW.

So, I think that looks very neat. He sent me a line, so blotted that I can scarcely read it, to say he would be here almost immediately. She must have loved him well, indeed, to have forgotten his birth; for though he was introduced to her in disguise, he is too honourable not to have revealed to her the artifice which her love only could forgive. Well, I do not wonder at it; for though my son is not a prince, he ought to be one, and that's almost as good. (*Knock at the door.*) Ah! here they are.

Enter Melnotte and Pauline.

WIDOW.

Oh, my boy—the pride of my heart!—welcome, welcome! I beg pardon, Ma'am, but I do love him so!

PAULINE.

Good woman, I really—why, Prince, what is this?—does the old lady know you? Oh, I guess you have done her some service: Another proof of your kind heart, is it not?

MELNOTTE.

Of my kind heart, ay!

PAULINE.

So you know the Prince?

WIDOW.

Know him, Madam?—ah, I begin to fear it is you who know him not!

PAULINE.

Do you think she is mad? Can we stay here, my Lord? I think there's something very wild about her.

MELNOTTE.

Madam, I—no I cannot tell her, my knees knock together: what a coward is a man who has lost his honour! Speak to her—speak to her (*to his Mother*)—tell her that—Oh, Heaven, that I were dead!

PAULINE.

How confused he looks!—this strange place—this woman—what can it mean?—I half suspect—Who are you, Madam?—who are you? can't you speak? are you struck dumb?

WIDOW.

Claude, you have not deceived her?—Ah, shame upon you? I thought that, before you went to the altar, she was to have known all.

PAULINE.

All! what?—My blood freezes in my veins!

WIDOW.

Poor lady!—dare I tell her, Claude? (*Melnotte makes a sign of assent.*) Know you not then, Madam, that this young man is of poor though honest parents? Know you not that you are wedded to my son, Claude Melnotte?

PAULINE.

Your son! hold—hold! do not speak to me—(*approaches Melnotte, and lays her hand on his arm*) Is this a jest? is it? I know it is, only speak—one word—one look—one smile. I cannot believe—I who loved thee so—I cannot believe that thou art such a——No, I will not wrong thee by a harsh word—speak!

MELNOTTE.

Leave us—have pity on her, on me: leave us.

WIDOW.

Oh, Claude, that I should live to see thee bowed by shame! thee of whom I was so proud!

[*Exit Widow by the staircase.*]

PAULINE.

Her son—her son—

MELNOTTE.

Now, lady, hear me.

PAULINE.

Hear thee!

Ay, speak—her son! have fiends a parent? speak,
That thou may'st silence curses—speak!

MELNOTTE.

No, curse me:

Thy curse would blast me less than thy forgiveness.

PAULINE (*laughing wildly*).

"This is thy palace, where the perfumed light
"Steals through the mist of alabaster lamps,
"And every air is heavy with the sighs
"Of orange groves, and music from sweet lutes,
"And murmurs of low fountains, that gush forth
"I' the midst of roses! Dost thou like the picture?"
This is my bridal home, and thou my bridegroom!

O fool—O dupe—O wretch !—I see it all—
 The bye-word and the jeer of every tongue
 In Lyons. Hast thou in thy heart one touch
 Of human kindness? if thou hast, why, kill me,
 And save thy wife from madness. No, it cannot—
 It cannot be: this is some horrid dream :
 I shall wake soon.—(*touching him*) Art flesh ? art man ? or but
 The shadows seen in sleep ?—It is too real.
 What have I done to thee ? how sinn'd against thee,
 That thou should'st crush me thus ?

MELNOTTE.

Pauline, by pride

Angels have fallen ere thy time : by pride—
 That sole alloy of thy most lovely mould—
 The evil spirit of a bitter love,
 And a revengeful heart, had power upon thee.—
 From my first years, my soul was fill'd with thee :
 I saw thee midst the flow'rs the lowly boy
 Tended, unmark'd by thee—a spirit of bloom,
 And joy, and freshness, as if Spring itself
 Were made a living thing, and wore thy shape !
 I saw thee, and the passionate heart of man
 Enter'd the breast of the wild-dreaming boy ;
 And from that hour I grew—what to the last
 I shall be—thine adorer ! Well ; this love,
 Vain, frantic, guilty, if thou wilt, became
 A fountain of ambition and bright hope ;
 I thought of tales that by the winter hearth
 Old gossips tell—how maidens sprung from Kings
 Have stoop'd from their high sphere ; how Love, like Death,
 Levels all ranks, and lays the shepherd's crook
 Beside the sceptre. Thus I made my home
 In the soft palace of a fairy Future !
 My father died ; and I, the peasant-born,
 Was my own lord. Then did I seek to rise
 Out of the prison of my mean estate ;
 And, with such jewels as the exploring Mind
 Brings from the caves of Knowledge, buy my ransom
 From those twin gaolers of the daring heart—
 Low Birth and iron Fortune. Thy bright image,
 Glass'd in my soul, took all the hues of glory,
 And lured me on to those inspiring toils
 By which man masters men ! For thee I grew
 A midnight student o'er the dreams of sages !
 For thee I sought to borrow from each Grace,
 And every Muse, such attributes as lend

Ideal charms to Love. I thought of thee,
 And Passion taught me poesy—of thee,
 And on the painter's canvas grew the life
 Of beauty!—Art became the shadow
 Of the dear starlight of thy haunting eyes!
 Men call'd me vain—some mad—I heeded not;
 But still toiled on—hoped on—for it was sweet,
 If not to win, to feel more worthy thee!

PAULINE.

Has he a magic to exorcise hate?

MELNOTTE.

At last, in one mad hour, I dared to pour
 The thoughts that burst their channels into song,
 And sent them to thee—such a tribute, lady,
 As beauty rarely scorns, even from the meanest.
 The name—appended by the burning heart
 That long'd to show its idol what bright things
 It had created—yea, the enthusiast's name,
 That should have been thy triumph, was thy scorn!
 That very hour—when passion, turned to wrath,
 Resembled hatred most—when thy disdain
 Made my whole soul a chaos—in that hour
 The tempters found me a revengeful tool
 For their revenge! Thou hadst trampled on the worm—
 It turn'd and stung thee!

PAULINE.

Love, Sir, hath no sting.

What was the slight of a poor powerless girl
 To the deep wrong of this most vile revenge?
 Oh, how I loved this man!—a serf!—a slave!

MELNOTTE.

Hold, lady!—No, not slave! Despair is free!
 I will not tell thee of the throes—the struggles—
 The anguish—the remorse: No—let it pass!
 And let me come to such most poor atonement
 Yet in my power. Pauline!—

(Approaching her with great emotion, and about to take her hand).

PAULINE.

No, touch me not!

I know my fate. You are, by law, my tyrant;
 And I—oh Heaven!—a peasant's wife! I'll work—
 Toil—drudge—do what thou wilt—but touch me not;
 Let my wrongs make me sacred!

MELNOTTE.

Do not fear me.

Thou dost not know me, Madam : at the altar
My vengeance ceased—my guilty oath expired !
Henceforth, no image of some marble saint,
Nich'd in cathedral aisles, is hallow'd more
From the rude hand of sacrilegious wrong.
I am thy husband—nay, thou need'st not shudder ;—
Here, at thy feet, I lay a husband's rights.
A marriage thus unholy—unfulfilled—
A bond of fraud—is, by the laws of France,
Made void and null. To-night sleep—sleep in peace.
To-morrow, pure and virgin as this morn
I bore thee, bathed in blushes, from the shrine,
Thy father's arms shall take thee to thy home.
The law shall do thee justice, and restore
Thy right to bless another with thy love.
And when thou art happy, and hast half forgot
Him who so loved—so wrong'd thee, think at least
Heaven left some remnant of the angel still
In that poor peasant's nature !

Ho ! my mother !

Enter Widow.

Conduct this lady—(she is not my wife ;
She is our guest,—our honour'd guest, my mother !)—
To the poor chamber, where the sleep of virtue,
Never, beneath my father's honest roof,
Ev'n villains dared to mar ! Now, lady, now,
I think thou wilt believe me.—Go, my mother !

WIDOW.

She is not thy wife !—

MELNOTTE.

Hush ! hush ! for mercy's sake !

Speak not, but go.

(*Widow ascends the stairs ; Pauline follows weeping—turns
to look back.*)

MELNOTTE (*sinking down*).

All angels bless and guard her.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Cottage as before—Melnotte seated before a table—writing implements, &c.—(Day breaking.)

MELNOTTE.

Hush, hush!—she sleeps at last!—thank Heaven, for awhile, she forgets even that I live! Her sobs, which have gone to my heart the whole, long, desolate night, have ceased!—all calm—all still! I will go now; I will send this letter to Pauline's father—when he arrives, I will place in his hands my own consent to the divorce, and then, O France! my country! accept among thy protectors, thy defenders—the Peasant's Son! Our country is less proud than Custom, and does not refuse the blood, the heart, the right hand of the poor man!

Enter Widow.

WIDOW.

My son, thou hast acted ill; but sin brings its own punishment. In the hour of thy remorse, it is not for a mother to reproach thee!

MELNOTTE.

What is past is past. There is a future left to all men, who have the virtue to repent and the energy to atone. Thou shalt be proud of thy son, yet. Meanwhile, remember this poor lady has been grievously injured. For the sake of thy son's conscience, respect, honour, bear with her. If she weep, console—if she chide, be silent! 'Tis but a little while more—I shall send an express fast as horse can speed to her father. Farewell!—I shall return shortly.

WIDOW.

It is the only course left to thee—thou wert led astray, but thou art not hardened. Thy heart is right still, as ever it was, when in thy most ambitious hopes, thou wert never ashamed of thy poor mother!

MELNOTTE.

Ashamed of thee!—No, if I yet endure, yet live, yet hope—it is only because I would not die till I have redeemed the noble heritage I have lost—the heritage I took unstained from

thee and my dead father—a proud conscience and an honest name. I shall win them back yet—Heaven bless you!

[*Exit.*]

WIDOW.

My dear Claude!—How my heart bleeds for him!
(*Pauline looks down from above, and after a pause descends.*)

PAULINE.

Not here!—he spares me that pain at least: so far he is considerate—yet the place seems still more desolate without him. Oh, that I could hate him—the gardener's son!—and yet how nobly he—no—no—no I will not be so mean a thing as to forgive him!

WIDOW.

Good morning, Madam; I would have waited on you if I had known you were stirring.

PAULINE.

It is no matter, Ma'am—your son's wife ought to wait on herself.

WIDOW.

My son's wife—let not that thought vex you, Madam—he tells me that you will have your divorce. And I hope I shall live to see him smile again. There are maidens in this village, young and fair, Madam, who may yet console him.

PAULINE.

I dare say—they are very welcome—and when the divorce is got, he will marry again. I am sure I hope so (*weeps*).

WIDOW.

He could have married the richest girl in the province, if he had pleased it; but his head was turned poor child!—he could think of nothing but you (*weeps*).

PAULINE.

Don't weep, mother.

WIDOW.

Ah, he has behaved very ill, I know—but love is so head-strong in the young. Don't weep, madam.

PAULINE.

So, as you were saying—go on.

WIDOW.

Oh, I cannot excuse him, Ma'am—he was not in his right senses.

PAULINE.

But he always—always (*sobbing*) loved—loved me then.

WIDOW.

He thought of nothing else—see here—he learnt to paint that he might take your likeness (*uncovers the picture*). But that's all over now—I trust you have cured him of his folly—but, dear heart, you have had no breakfast!

PAULINE.

I can't take anything—don't trouble yourself.

WIDOW.

Nay, Madam, be persuaded; a little coffee will refresh you. Our milk and eggs are excellent. I will get out Claude's coffee-cup—it is of real Sèvres; he saved up all his money to buy it three years ago, because the name of *Pauline* was inscribed on it.

PAULINE.

Three years ago! Poor Claude!—Thank you; I think I will have some coffee. Oh! if he were but a poor gentleman, even a merchant: but a gardener's son—and what a home!—Oh no, it is too dreadful!

(*They seat themselves at the table—Beauseant opens the lattice and looks in.*)

BEAUSEANT.

So—so—the coast is clear! I saw Claude in the lane—I shall have an excellent opportunity.

(*Shuts the lattice and knocks at the door.*)

PAULINE (*starting*).

Can it be my father?—he has not sent for him yet? No, he cannot be in such a hurry to get rid of me.

WIDOW.

It is not time for your father to arrive yet; it must be some neighbour.

PAULINE.

Don't admit any one.

(*Widow opens the door, Beauseant pushes her aside and enters.*)

Ah! Heavens! that hateful Beauseant! This is indeed bitter!

BEAUSEANT.

Good morning, Madam! Oh, Widow, your son begs you will have the goodness to go to him in the village—he wants to speak to you on particular business; you'll find him at the inn, or the grocer's shop, or the baker's, or at some other friend's of your family—make haste!

PAULINE.

Don't leave me, mother!—don't leave me.

BEAUSEANT (*with great respect*).

Be not alarmed, Madam. Believe me your friend—your servant.

PAULINE.

Sir, I have no fear of you, even in this house! Go, Madam, if your son wishes it; I will not contradict his commands whilst, at least, he has still the right to be obeyed.

WIDOW.

I don't understand this; however, I shan't be long gone.

[*Exit.*]

PAULINE.

Sir, I divine the object of your visit—you wish to exult in the humiliation of one who humbled you. Be it so; I am prepared to endure all—even your presence!

BEAUSEANT.

You mistake me, Madam—Pauline, you mistake me! come to lay my fortune at your feet. You must already be disenchanted with this impostor; these walls are not worthy to be hallowed by your beauty!. Shall that form be clasped in the arms of a base-born peasant? Beloved, beautiful Pauline! fly with me—my carriage waits without—I will bear you to a home more meet for your reception. Wealth, luxury, station—all shall yet be yours. I forget your past disdain—I remember only your beauty, and my unconquerable love!

PAULINE.

Sir! leave this house—it is humble: but a husband's roof, however lowly, is, in the eyes of God and man, the temple of a wife's honour! Know that I would rather starve—yes!—with him who has betrayed me, than accept your lawful hand, even were you the Prince whose name he bore!—Go.

BEAUSEANT.

What, is not your pride humbled yet?

PAULINE.

Sir, what was pride in prosperity, in affliction becomes virtue.

BEAUSEANT.

Look round: these rugged floors—these homely walls—this wretched struggle of poverty for comfort—think of this! and contrast with such a picture the refinement, the luxury, the pomp that the wealthiest gentleman of Lyons offers to the loveliest lady. Ah, hear me!

PAULINE.

Oh! my father!—why did I leave you?—why am I thus friendless? Sir, you see before you a betrayed, injured, miserable woman!—respect her anguish!

(*Melnotte opens the door silently, and pauses at the threshold.*)

BEAUSEANT.

No! let me rather thus console it; let me snatch from those lips one breath of that fragrance which never should be wasted on the low churl thy husband.

PAULINE.

Help! Claude!—Claude!—Have I no protector?

BEAUSEANT.

Be silent! (*showing a pistol*) See, I do not come unprepared even for violence. I will brave all things—thy husband and all his race—for thy sake. Thus, then, I clasp thee!

MELNOTTE (*dashing him to the other end of the stage*).

Pauline—look up, Pauline! thou art safe.

BEAUSEANT (*levelling his pistol*).

Dare you thus insult a man of my birth, ruffian?

PAULINE.

Oh spare him—spare my husband!—Beauseant—Claude—no—no—(*faints*).

MELNOTTE.

Miserable trickster! shame upon you! brave devices to terrify a woman! coward—you tremble—you have outraged the laws—you know that your weapon is harmless—you have the courage of the mountebank, not the bravo!—Pauline, there is no danger.

BEAUSEANT.

I wish thou wert a gentleman—as it is thou art beneath me.—Good day, and a happy honeymoon. (*aside*) I will not die till I am avenged. [*Exit Beauseant.*]

MELNOTTE.

I hold her in these arms—the last embrace!
Never, ah never more, shall this dear head
Be pillow'd on the heart that should have shelter'd
And has betray'd! Soft—soft! one kiss—poor wretch!
No scorn on that pale lip forbids me now!
One kiss—so ends all record of my crime!
It is the seal upon the tomb of Hope,
By which, like some lost, sorrowing angel, sits
Sad Memory evermore;—she breathes—she moves—

She wakes to scorn, to hate, but not to shudder
Beneath the touch of my abhorred love.

(Places her on a seat.)

There—we are strangers now !

PAULINE.

All gone—all calm—

Is *every* thing a dream ? thou art safe, unhurt—
I do not love thee ; but—but I am woman,
And—and—no blood is spilt ?

MELNOTTE.

No, lady, no ;

My guilt hath not deserved so rich a blessing
As even danger in thy cause.

Enter Widow.

WIDOW.

My son, I have been everywhere in search of you ; why did
you send for me ?

MELNOTTE.

I did not send for you.

WIDOW.

No ! but I must tell you your express has returned.

MELNOTTE.

So soon ! impossible !

WIDOW.

Yes, he met the lady's father and mother on the road ; they
were going into the country on a visit. Your messenger says
that Monsieur Deschappelles turned almost white with anger,
when he read your letter. They will be here almost imme-
diately. Oh, Claude, Claude ! what will they do to you ?
How I tremble !—Ah, Madam ! do not let them injure him—
if you knew how he doted on you !

PAULINE.

Injure him ! no, Ma'am, be not afraid ;—my father ! how
shall I meet him ? how go back to Lyons ? the scoff of the
whole city !—cruel, cruel, Claude—*(in great agitation)*—Sir,
you have acted most treacherously.

MELNOTTE.

I know it, Madam.

PAULINE.

(Aside) If he would but ask me to forgive him !—I never
can forgive you, Sir !

MELNOTTE.

I never dared to hope it.

PAULINE.

But you are my husband now, and I have sworn to—to love you, Sir.

MELNOTTE.

That was under a false belief, Madam; Heaven and the laws will release you from your vow.

PAULINE.

He will drive me mad! if he were but less proud—if he would but ask me to remain—hark, hark—I hear the wheels of the carriage—Sir—Claude, they are coming; have you no word to say ere it is too late? quick—speak!

MELNOTTE.

I can only congratulate you on your release. Behold your parents!

Enter Monsieur and Madame Deschappelles and Colonel Damas.

MONS. DESCHAP.

My child!—my child!

MADAME DESCHAP.

Oh my poor Pauline!—what a villanous hovel this is! Old woman, get me a chair—I shall faint—I certainly shall. What will the world say?—Child, you have been a fool. A mother's heart is easily broken.

DAMAS.

Ha, ha!—most noble Prince—I am sorry to see a man of your quality in such a condition; I am afraid your Highness will go to the House of Correction.

MELNOTTE.

Taunt on, Sir—I spared *you* when you were unarmed—I am unarmed now. A man who has no excuse for crime is indeed defenceless!

DAMAS.

There's something fine in the rascal, after all!

MONS. DESCHAP.

Where is the impostor?—Are you thus shameless, traitor? Can you brave the presence of that girl's father?

MELNOTTE.

Strike me, if it please you—you *are* her father!

PAULINE.

Sir—sir, for my sake;—whatever his guilt, he has acted nobly in atonement.

MADAME DESCHAP.

Nobly! Are you mad, girl? I have no patience with you—to disgrace all your family thus!—Nobly! Oh you abominable, hardened, pitiful, mean, ugly villain!

DAMAS.

Ugly! Why he was beautiful yesterday!

PAULINE.

Madam, this is his roof, and he is my husband. Respect your daughter, and let blame fall alone on her.

MADAME DESCHAP.

You—you—Oh, I'm choking.

MONS. DESCHAP.

Sir, it were idle to waste reproach upon a conscience like yours—you renounce all pretensions to the person of this lady?

MELNOTTE.

I do.—(*Gives a paper*) Here is my consent to a divorce—my full confession of the fraud, which annuls the marriage. Your daughter has been foully wronged—I grant it, Sir; but her own lips will tell you, that from the hour in which she crossed this threshold, I returned to my own station, and respected her's. Pure and inviolate, as when yesternorn you laid your hand upon her head, and blessed her, I yield her back to you. For myself—I deliver you for ever from my presence. An outcast and a criminal, I seek some distant land, where I may mourn my sin, and pray for your daughter's peace. Farewell—farewell to you all, for ever!

WIDOW.

Claude, Claude, you will not leave your poor old mother? *She* does not disown you in your sorrow—no, not even in your guilt. No divorce can separate a mother from her son.

PAULINE.

This poor widow teaches me my duty. No, mother—no, for you are now *my* mother also!—nor should any law, human or divine, separate the wife from her husband's sorrows. Claude—Claude—all is forgotten—forgiven—I am thine for ever!

MADAME DESCHAP.

What do I hear?—Come away, or never see my face again.

MONS. DESCHAP.

Pauline, *we* never betrayed you!—do you forsake us for him?

PAULINE (*going back to her father*).

Oh, no—but you will forgive him too; we will live together—he shall be your son.

MONS. DESCHAP. .

Never! Cling to him and forsake your parents! His home shall be your's—his fortune your's—his fate your's: the wealth I have acquired by honest industry shall never enrich the dishonest man.

PAULINE.

And you would have a wife enjoy luxury while a husband toils! Claude, take me; thou canst not give me wealth, titles, station—but thou canst give me a true heart. I will work for thee, tend thee, bear with thee, and never, never shall these lips reproach thee for the past.

DAMAS.

I'll be hanged if I am not going to blubber!

MELNOTTE.

This is the heaviest blow of all!—What a heart I have wronged!—Do not fear me, Sir; I am not all hardened—I will not rob her of a holier love than mine. Pauline!—angel of love and mercy!—your memory shall lead me back to virtue!—The husband of a being so beautiful in her noble and sublime tenderness may be poor—may be low-born;—(there is no guilt in the decrees of Providence!)—but he should be one who can look thee in the face without a blush,—to whom thy love does not bring remorse,—who can fold thee to his heart, and say,—“*Here* there is no deceit!”—I am not that man!

DAMAS (*aside to Melnotte*).

Thou art a noble fellow, notwithstanding; and would'st make an excellent soldier. Serve in my regiment. I have had a letter from the Directory—our young General takes the command of the army in Italy,—I am to join him at Marseilles,—I will depart this day, if thou wilt go with me.

MELNOTTE.

It is the favour I would have asked thee, if I dared. Place me wherever a foe is most dreaded,—wherever France most needs a life!

DAMAS.

There shall not be a forlorn hope without thee!

MELNOTTE.

There is my hand!—Mother! your blessing. I shall see you again,—a better man than a prince,—a man who has

bought the right to high thoughts by brave deeds. And thou!—thou! so wildly worshipped, so guiltily betrayed,—all is not yet lost!—for thy memory, at least, must be mine till death! If I live, the name of him thou hast once loved shall not rest dishonoured;—if I fall, amidst the carnage and the roar of battle, my soul will fly back to thee, and Love shall share with Death my last sigh!—More—more would I speak to thee!—to pray!—to bless! But, no!—when I am less unworthy I will utter it to Heaven!—I cannot trust myself to—(*turning to Deschappelles*). Your pardon, Sir;—they are my last words—Farewell!

[*Exit.*

DAMAS.

I will go after him.—France will thank me for this.

[*Exit.*

PAULINE (*starting from her father's arms*).

Claude!—Claude!—my husband!

MONS. DESCHAP.

You have a father still!

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

(Two years and a half from the date of Act IV.)

The Streets of Lyons.

Enter First, Second, and Third Officer.

FIRST OFFICER.

Well, here we are at Lyons, with gallant old Damas: it is his native place.

SECOND OFFICER.

Yes; he has gained a step in the army since he was here last. The Lyonnese ought to be very proud of stout General Damas.

THIRD OFFICER.

Promotion is quick in the French army. This mysterious Morier,—the hero of Lodi, and the favourite of the Commander-in-Chief,—has risen to a colonel's rank in two years and a half.

Enter Damas, as a General.

DAMAS.

Good morrow, gentlemen; I hope you will amuse yourselves during our short stay at Lyons. It is a fine city; improved since I left it. Ah! it is a pleasure to grow old,—when the years that bring decay to ourselves do but ripen the prosperity of our country. You have not met with Morier?

FIRST OFFICER.

No: we were just speaking of him.

SECOND OFFICER.

Pray, General, can you tell us who this Morier really is?

DAMAS.

Is!—why a Colonel in the French army.

THIRD OFFICER.

True. But what was he at first?

DAMAS.

At first?—Why, a baby in long clothes, I suppose.

FIRST OFFICER.

Ha!—ha!—Ever facetious, General.

SECOND OFFICER (*to Third*).

The General is sore upon this point; you will only chafe him.—Any commands, General?

DAMAS.

None.—Good day to you!

[*Exeunt Second and Third Officers.*]

DAMAS.

Our comrades are very inquisitive. Poor Morier is the subject of a vast deal of curiosity.

FIRST OFFICER.

Say interest, rather, General. His constant melancholy,—the loneliness of his habits,—his daring valour,—his brilliant rise in the profession,—your friendship, and the favours of the Commander-in-Chief,—all tend to make him as much the matter of gossip as of admiration. But where is he, General? I have missed him all the morning.

DAMAS.

Why, Captain, I'll let you into a secret. My young friend has come with me to Lyons in hopes of finding a miracle.

FIRST OFFICER.

A miracle!—

DAMAS.

Yes, a miracle! In other words,—a constant woman.

FIRST OFFICER.

Oh!—an affair of love!

DAMAS.

Exactly so. No sooner did he enter Lyons than he waved his hand to me, threw himself from his horse, and is now, I warrant, asking every one, who can know anything about the matter, whether a certain lady is still true to a certain gentleman!

FIRST OFFICER.

Success to him!—and of that success there can be no doubt. The gallant Colonel Morier, the hero of Iodi, might make his choice out of the proudest families in France.

DAMAS.

Oh, if pride be a recommendation, the lady and her mother are most handsomely endowed. By the way, Captain, if you should chance to meet with Morier, tell him he will find me at the hotel.

FIRST OFFICER.

I will, General.

[*Exit.*]

DAMAS.

Now will I go to the Deschappelles, and make a report to my young Colonel. Ha! by Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Viro-
rum,—here comes Monsieur Beauseant!

Enter Beauseant.

Good morrow, Monsieur Beauseant! How fares it with you?

BEAUSEANT (*aside*).

Damas! that is unfortunate;—if the Italian campaign should have filled his pockets, he may seek to baffle me in the moment of my victory. (*Aloud*) Your servant, General,—for such, I think, is your new distinction! Just arrived in Lyons?

DAMAS.

Not an hour ago. Well, how go on the Deschappelles? Have they forgiven you in that affair of young Melnotte? You had some hand in that notable device,—eh?

BEAUSEANT.

Why, less than you think for! The fellow imposed upon me. I have set it all right now. What has become of him? He could not have joined the army after all. There is no such name in the books.

DAMAS.

I know nothing about Melnotte. As you say, I never heard the name in the Grand Army.

BEAUSEANT.

Hem!—You are not married, General?

DAMAS.

Do I look like a married man, Sir?—No, thank Heaven! My profession is to make widows, not wives.

BEAUSEANT.

You must have gained much booty, in Italy! Pauline will be your heiress---eh?

DAMAS.

Booty! Not I! Heiress to what? Two trunks and a portmanteau,—four horses,—three swords,—two suits of regimentals, and six pair of white leather inexpressibles! A pretty-fortune for a young lady!

BEAUSEANT.

(*Aside*) Then all is safe! (*Aloud*) Ha! ha! Is that really all your capital, General Damas? Why, I thought Italy had been a second Mexico to you soldiers.

DAMAS.

All a toss up, Sir. I was not one of the lucky ones! My friend Morier, indeed, saved something handsome. But our Commander-in-Chief took care of him, and Morier is a thrifty, economical dog,—not like the rest of us soldiers, who spend our money as carelessly as if it were our blood.

BEAUSEANT.

Well, it is no matter! I do not want fortune with Pauline. And you must know, General Damas, that your fair cousin has at length consented to reward my long and ardent attachment.

DAMAS.

You!—the devil! Why, she is already married! There is no divorce!

BEAUSEANT.

True; but this very day she is formally to authorize the necessary proceedings,—this very day she is to sign the contract that is to make her mine within one week from the day on which her present illegal marriage is annulled.

DAMAS.

You tell me wonders!—Wonders! No; I believe anything of women!

BEAUSEANT.

I must wish you good morning.

(As he is going, enter Deschappelles.)

MONS. DESCHAP.

Oh, Beauseant! well met. Let us come to the notary at once.

DAMAS *(to Deschappelles)*.

Why, cousin!

MONS. DESCHAP.

Damas, welcome to Lyons. Pray call on us; my wife will be delighted to see you.

DAMAS.

Your wife be——blessed for her condescension! But *(taking him aside)* what do I hear? Is it possible that your daughter has consented to a divorce?—that she will marry Monsieur Beauseant?

MONS. DESCHAP.

Certainly! What have you to say against it? A gentleman of birth, fortune, character. We are not so proud as we were; even my wife has had enough of nobility and princes!

DAMAS.

But Pauline loved that young man so tenderly!

MONS. DESCHAP. (*taking snuff*).

That was two years and a half ago!

DAMAS.

Very true. Poor Melnotte!

MONS. DESCHAP.

But do not talk of that impostor; I hope he is dead or has left the country. Nay, even were he in Lyons at this moment, he ought to rejoice that, in an honourable and suitable alliance, my daughter may forget her sufferings and his crime.

DAMAS.

Nay, if it be all settled, I have no more to say. Monsieur Beauseant informs me that the contract is to be signed this very day.

MONS. DESCHAP.

It is; at one o'clock precisely. Will you be one of the witnesses?

DAMAS.

I?—No; that is to say—yes, certainly!—at one o'clock I will wait on you.

MONS. DESCHAP.

Till then, adieu—come Beauseant.

[*Exeunt Beauseant and Deschappelles.*]

DAMAS.

The man who sets his heart upon a woman
Is a chameleon, and doth feed on air;
From air he takes his colours,—holds his life,—
Changes with every wind,—grows lean or fat;
Rosy with hope, or green with jealousy,
Or pallid with despair—just as the gale
Varies from north to south—from heat to cold!
Oh, woman! woman! thou should'st have few sins
Of thine own to answer for! Thou art the author
Of such a book of follies in a man,
That it would need the tears of all the angels
To blot the record out!

Enter Melnotte, pale and agitated.

I need not tell thee! Thou hast heard—

MELNOTTE.

The worst!

I have!

DAMAS.

Be cheer'd; others are as fair as she is!

MELNOTTE.

Others!—The world is crumbled at my feet!
 She *was* my world; fill'd up the whole of being—
 Smiled in the sunshine—walk'd the glorious earth—
 Sate in my heart—was the sweet life of life.
 The Past was hers: I dreamt not of a Future
 That did not wear her shape! Mem'ry and Hope
 Alike are gone. Pauline is faithless! Henceforth
 The universal space is desolate!

DAMAS.

Hope yet.

MELNOTTE.

Hope, yes!—one hope is left me still—
 A soldier's grave! Glory has died with Love;
 I look into my heart, and, where I saw
 Pauline, see Death!

(*After a pause.*)—But am I not deceived?
 I went but by the rumour of the town;
 Rumour is false,—I was too hasty! Damas,
 Whom hast thou seen?

DAMAS.

Thy rival and her father.
 Arm thyself for the truth!—He heeds not—

MELNOTTE.

She
 Will never know how deeply she was loved!
 The charitable night, that wont to bring
 Comfort to day, in bright and eloquent dreams,
 Is henceforth leagued with misery! Sleep, farewell,
 Or else become eternal! Oh, the waking
 From false oblivion, and to see the sun,
 And know she is another's!—

DAMAS.

Be a man!

MELNOTTE.

I am a man!—it is the sting of woe,
 Like mine, that tells us we are men!

DAMAS.

The false one

Did not deserve thee.

MELNOTTE.

Hush!—No word against her!
 Why should she keep, thro' years and silent absence,
 The holy tablets of her virgin faith
 True to a traitor's name? Oh, blame her not,

It were a sharper grief to think her worthless
 Than to be what I am! To-day,—to-day!
 They said “to-day!” This day, so wildly welcomed—
 This day, my soul had singled out of time
 And mark’d for bliss! This day! oh, could I see her,
 See her once more, unknown; but hear her voice.
 So that one echo of its music might
 Make ruin less appalling in its silence.

DAMAS.

Easily done! Come with me to her house;
 Your dress—your cloak—moustache—the bronzed hues
 Of time and toil—the name you bear—belief
 In your absence, all will ward away suspicion.
 Keep in the shade. Ay, I would have you come.
 There may be hope! Pauline is yet so young,
 They may have forced her to these second bridal;
 Out of mistaken love.

MELNOTTE.

No, bid me hope not!
 Bid me not hope! I could not bear again
 To fall from such a heaven! One gleam of sunshine,
 And the ice breaks and I am lost! Oh, Damas,
 There’s no such thing as courage in a man;
 The veriest slave that ever crawl’d from danger
 Might spurn me now. When first I lost her, Damas,
 I bore it, did I not? I still had hope,
 And now I—I— (*bursts into an agony of grief*).

DAMAS.

What, comrade! all the women
 That ever smiled destruction on brave hearts
 Were not worth tears like these!

MELNOTTE.

’Tis past—forget it.
 I am prepared; life has no farther ills!
 The cloud has broken in that stormy rain,
 And on the waste I stand, alone with Heaven!

DAMAS.

His very face is changed; a breaking heart
 Does its work soon!—Come, Melnotte, rouse thyself:
 One effort more. Again thou’lt see her.

MELNOTTE.

See her!

There is a passion in that simple sentence.
 That shivers all the pride and power of reason
 Into a chaos!

DAMAS.

Time wanes;—come, ere yet

It be too late.

MELNOTTE.

Terrible words—"Too late!"

Lead on. One last look more, and then——

DAMAS.

Forget her!

MELNOTTE.

Forget her, yes!—For death remembers not. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A room in the house of Monsieur Deschappelles; Pauline seated in great dejection.

PAULINE.

It is so, then. I must be false to Love,
Or sacrifice a father! Oh, my Claude,
My lover, and my husband! have I lived
To pray that thou may'st find some fairer boon
Than the deep faith of this devoted heart,—
Nourish'd till now—now broken?

Enter Monsieur Deschappelles.

MONS. DESCHAP.

My dear child,

How shall I thank—how bless thee? Thou hast saved
I will not say my fortune—I could bear
Reverse, and shrink not—but that prouder wealth
Which merchants value most—my name, my credit—
The hard-won honours of a toilsome life—
These thou hast saved, my child!

PAULINE.

Is there no hope?

No hope but this?

MONS. DESCHAP.

None. If, without the sum

Which Beauseant offers for thy hand, this day
Sinks to the west—to-morrow brings our ruin!
And hundreds, mingled in that ruin, curse
The bankrupt merchant! and the insolent herd
We feasted and made merry cry in scorn
"How pride has fallen!—Lo, the bankrupt merchant!"—
My daughter, thou hast saved us!

PAULINE.

And am lost !

MONS. DESCHAP.

Come, let me hope that Beauseant's love——

PAULINE.

His love !

Talk not of love—Love has no thought of self !
 Love buys not with the ruthless usurer's gold
 The loathsome prostitution of a hand
 Without a heart ! Love sacrifices all things
 To bless the thing it loves ! *He* knows not love.
 Father, his love is hate—his hope revenge !
 My tears, my anguish, my remorse for falsehood—
 These are the joys he wrings from our despair !

MONS. DESCHAP.

If thou deem'st thus, reject him ! Shame and ruin
 Were better than thy misery ;—think no more on't.
 My sand is well nigh run—what boots it when
 The glass is broken ? We'll annul the contract.
 And if to-morrow in the prisoner's cell
 These aged limbs are laid, why still, my child,
 I'll think thou art spared ; and wait the Liberal Hour
 That lays the beggar by the side of kings !

PAULINE.

No—no—forgive me ! You, my honour'd father,—
 You, who so loved, so cherish'd me, whose lips
 Never knew one harsh word ! I'm not ungrateful ;
 I am but human !—hush ! *Now*, call the bridegroom—
 You see I am prepared—no tears—all calm ;
 But, father, *talk no more of love !*

MONS. DESCHAP.

My child,

'Tis but one struggle ; he is young, rich, noble ;
 Thy state will rank first 'mid the dames of Lyons ;
 And when this heart can shelter thee no more,
 Thy youth will not be guardianless.

PAULINE.

I have set

My foot upon the ploughshare—I will pass
 The fiery ordeal. (*Aside*) Merciful Heaven, support me !
 And on the absent wanderer shed the light
 Of happier stars—lost evermore to me !

Enter Madame Deschappelles, Beauseant, Glavis, and Notary

MADAME DESCHAP.

Why, Pauline, you are quite in *deshabille*—you ought to be more alive to the importance of this joyful occasion. We had once looked higher, it is true; but you see, after all, Monsieur Beauseant's father *was* a Marquis, and that's a great comfort! Pedigree and jointure!—you have them both in Monsieur Beauseant. A young lady decorously brought up should only have two considerations in her choice of a husband:—first, is his birth honorable,—secondly, will his death be advantageous? All other trifling details should be left to parental anxiety!

BEAUSEANT (*approaching, and waving aside Madame*).

Ah, Pauline! let me hope that you are reconciled to an event which confers such rapture upon me.

PAULINE.

I am reconciled to my doom.

BEAUSEANT.

Doom is a harsh word, sweet lady.

PAULINE (*aside*).

This man must have some mercy—his heart cannot be marble. (*Aloud*) Oh, Sir, be just—be generous!—Seize a noble triumph—a great revenge!—Save the father, and spare the child!

BEAUSEANT (*aside*).

Joy—joy alike to my hatred and my passion! The haughty Pauline is at last my suppliant. (*Aloud*) You ask from me what I have not the sublime virtue to grant—a virtue reserved only for the gardener's son! I cannot forego my hopes in the moment of their fulfilment!—I adhere to the contract—your father's ruin, or your hand!

PAULINE.

Then all is over.—Sir, I have decided.

(*The Clock strikes One.*)

Enter Damas and Melnotte.

DAMAS.

Your servant, cousin Deschappelles.—Let me introduce Colonel Morier.

MADAME DESCHAP. (*curtsying very low*).

What, the celebrated hero? This is indeed an honour!

(*Melnotte bows, and remains in the back-ground.*)

DAMAS (*to Pauline*).

My little cousin, I congratulate you! What, no smile—no blush? You are going to be divorced from poor Melnotte, and marry this rich gentleman. You ought to be excessively happy!

PAULINE.

Happy!

DAMAS.

Why, how pale you are, child!—Poor Pauline! Hist—confide in me! Do they force you to this?

PAULINE.

No!

DAMAS.

You act with your own free consent?

PAULINE.

My own consent—yes.

DAMAS.

Then you are the most—I will not say what you are.

PAULINE.

You think ill of me—be it so—yet if you knew all——

DAMAS.

There is some mystery—speak out, Pauline.

PAULINE (*suddenly*).

Oh! perhaps you can save me! you are our relation—our friend. My father is on the verge of bankruptcy—this day he requires a large sum to meet demands that cannot be denied; that sum Beauseant will advance—this hand the condition of the barter. Save me if you have the means—save me! You will be repaid above!

DAMAS (*aside*).

I recant—Women are not so bad after all!—(*aloud*) Humph, child! I cannot help you—I am too poor!

PAULINE.

The last plank to which I clung is shivered!

DAMAS.

Hold—you see my friend Morier: Melnotte is his most intimate friend—fought in the same fields—slept in the same tent. Have you any message to send to Melnotte?—any word to soften this blow?

PAULINE.

He knows Melnotte—he will see him—he will bear to him my last farewell—(*approaches Melnotte*)—He has a stern air—he turns away from me—he despises me!—Sir, one word I beseech you.

MELNOTTE.

Her voice again! How the old time comes o'er me!

DAMAS (*to Madame*).

Don't interrupt them. He is going to tell her what a rascal young Melnotte is; he knows him well, I promise you.

MADAME DESCHAP.

So considerate in you, cousin Damas!

(*Damas approaches Deschappelles; converses apart with him in dumb show.—Deschappelles shows him a paper, which he inspects, and takes.*)

PAULINE.

Thrice have I sought to speak; my courage fails me.—Sir, is it true that you have known—nay, are The friend of—Melnotte?

MELNOTTE.

Lady, yes!—Myself
And Misery know the man!

PAULINE.

And you will see him.
And you will bear to him—ay—word for word,
All that this heart, which breaks in parting from him,
Would send, ere still for ever.

MELNOTTE.

He hath told me
You have the right to choose from out the world
A worthier bridegroom;—he foregoes all claim,
Even to murmur at his doom.—Speak on!

PAULINE.

Tell him, for years I never nursed a thought
That was not his;—that on his wandering way,
Daily and nightly, poured a mourner's prayers.
Tell him ev'n now that I would rather share
His lowliest lot,—walk by his side, an outcast;—
Work for him, beg with him,—live upon the light
Of one kind smile from him, than wear the crown
The Bourbon lost!

MELNOTTE (*aside*).

Am I already mad?
And does Delirium utter such sweet words
Into a Dreamer's ear? (*Aloud*) You love him thus,
And yet desert him?

PAULINE.

Say, that, if his eye
Could read this heart,—its struggles, its temptations,—
His love itself would pardon that desertion!
Look on that poor old man—he is my father;
He stands upon the verge of an abyss;—
He calls his child to save him! Shall I shrink
From him who gave me birth?—withhold my hand,
And see a parent perish? Tell him this,
And say—that we shall meet again in Heaven!

MELNOTTE (*aside*).

The night is past—joy cometh with the morrow.
(*Aloud*) Lady—I—I—what is this riddle?—what
The nature of this sacrifice?

PAULINE (*pointing to Damas*).

Go, ask him!

BEAUSEANT (*from the table*).

The papers are prepared—we only need
Your hand and seal.

MELNOTTE.

Stay, lady—one word more.
Were but your duty with your faith united,
Would you still share the low-born peasant's lot?

PAULINE.

Would I? Ah, better death with him I love
Than all the pomp—which is but as the flowers
That crown the victim!—(*turning away*) I am ready.
(*Melnotte rushes to Damas*.)

DAMAS.

There—

This is the schedule—this the total.

BEAUSEANT (*to Deschappelles, showing notes*).

These

Are yours the instant she has signed; you are
Still the great House of Lyons!
(*The Notary is about to hand the Contract to Pauline,
when Melnotte seizes it and tears it.*)

BEAUSEANT.

Are you mad?

MONS. DESCHAP.

How, Sir! What means this insult?

MELNOTTE.

Peace, old man!

I have a prior claim. Before the face
Of man and Heaven I urge it! I outbid
Yon sordid huckster for your priceless jewel.

(Giving a pocket-book.)

There is the sum twice told! Blush not to take it:
There's not a coin that is not bought and hallow'd
In the cause of nations with a soldier's blood!

BEAUSEANT.

Torments and death!

PAULINE.

That voice! Thou art—

MELNOTTE.

Thy husband!

(Pauline rushes into his arms.)

MELNOTTE.

Look up! Look up, Pauline!—for I can bear
Thine eyes! The stain is blotted from my name.
I have redeem'd mine honour. I can call
On France to sanction thy divine forgiveness!
Oh, joy!—Oh, rapture! By the midnight watchfires
Thus have I seen thee! thus foretold this hour!
And, 'midst the roar of battle, thus have heard
The beating of thy heart against my own!

BEAUSEANT.

Fool'd, duped, and triumph'd over in the hour
Of mine own victory! Curses on ye both!
May thorns be planted in the marriage-bed!
And love grow sour'd and blacken'd into hate,
Such as the hate that gnaws me!

DAMAS.

Curse away!

And let me tell thee, Beauseant, a wise proverb
The Arabs have,—“Curses are like young chickens,
(Solemnly) And still come home to roost!”

BEAUSEANT.

Their happiness

Maddens my soul! I am powerless and revengeless!

*(To Madame)*I wish you joy! Ha, ha! The gardener's son! *[Exit.*

DAMAS (*to Glavis*).

Your friend intends to hang himself! Methinks
You ought to be his travelling companion!

GLAVIS.

Sir, you are exceedingly obliging!

[*Exit.*

PAULINE.

Oh!

My father, you are saved,—and by my husband!
Ah, blessed hour!

MELNOTTE.

Yet you weep still, Pauline!

PAULINE.

But on thy breast!—*these* tears are sweet and holy!

MONS. DESCHAP.

You have won love and honour nobly, Sir!
Take her;—be happy both!

MADAME DESCHAP.

I'm all astonish'd!

Who, then, is Colonel Morier?

DAMAS.

You behold him!

MELNOTTE.

Morier no more after this happy day!
I would not bear again my father's name
Till I could deem it spotless! The hour's come!
Heaven smiled on Conscience! As the soldier rose
From rank to rank, how sacred was the fame
That cancell'd crime, and raised him nearer thee!

MADAME DESCHAP.

A colonel and a hero! Well, that's something!
He's wondrously improved! I wish you joy, Sir!

MELNOTTE.

Ah! the same love that tempts us into sin,
If it be true love, works out its redemption;
And he who seeks repentance for the Past
Should woo the Angel Virtue in the Future!

THE END.

THE SEA-CAPTAIN;

OR,

THE BIRTHRIGHT:

A Drama

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LADY OF LYONS," "RICHELIEU," &c.

"The Son of Fortune, she has sent him forth
To thrive by the red sweat of his own merits."

MIDDLETON.

"Then triumph, Leon, richer in thy love
Than all the hopes of treasure."

CHAPMAN.

FOURTH EDITION.

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1839.

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Stamford Street.

TO THE
EARL OF DURHAM

THE AUTHOR DEDICATES

THIS DRAMA;

A SLIGHT TRIBUTE OF ADMIRATION FOR

A CLASSICAL AND ACCOMPLISHED JUDGE

IN ARTS AND LETTERS;

AND A SINCERE MEMORIAL

OF PERSONAL RESPECT AND REGARD.

October 23, 1839.



PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, OCTOBER 31st, 1839.

MEN.

LORD ASHDALE, son to Lady Arundel . . .	MR. J. WEBSTER.
SIR MAURICE BEEVOR, a reputed Miser, and though but distantly related to Lady Arun- del, the Heir-at-Law to the Titles and Es- tates, failing the children of the Countess	MR. STRICKLAND.
NORMAN, the Captain of a Ship of War . . .	MR. MACREADY.
FALKNER, his friend and Lieutenant . . .	MR. HOWE.
ONSLow, a Village Priest	MR. PHELPS.
GAUSSEN, a Pirate	MR. O. SMITH.
LUKE, a Pirate	MR. GALLOTT.
Servants, Sailors, Pirates, &c.	

WOMEN.

LADY ARUNDEL, a Countess in her own right .	MRS. WARNER.
VIOLET, her Ward, and cousin to Lord Ash- dale by his father's side	MISS H. FAUCIT.
MISTRESS PRUDENCE	MRS. CLIFFORD.

SCENE,—*The North of Devon.*

COSTUME,—*Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign.*

Time occupied by the action, one day.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

No one can be more sensible than I am of the many faults and deficiencies to be found in this play; but, perhaps, when it is considered how very rarely it has happened in the history of our dramatic literature that good *acting* plays have been produced, except by those who have either been actors themselves, or formed their habits of literature, almost of life, behind the scenes, I might have looked for a criticism more generous, and less exacting and rigorous, than that with which the attempts of an author accustomed to another class of composition have been received by a large proportion of the periodical press.

It is scarcely possible, indeed, that this play should not contain faults of two kinds: first, the faults of one who has necessarily much to learn in the mechanism of his art; and, secondly, of one who, having written

largely in the narrative style of fiction, may not unfrequently mistake the effects of a novel for the effects of a drama. I may add to these, perhaps, the deficiencies that arise from uncertain health and broken spirits, which render the author more susceptible than he might have been some years since to that spirit of depreciation and hostility which it has been his misfortune to excite amongst the general contributors to the periodical press: For the consciousness that every endeavour will be made to cavil, to distort, to misrepresent, and, in fine, if possible, to *run down*, will occasionally haunt even the hours of composition, to check the inspiration and damp the ardour.

Having confessed thus much frankly and fairly, and with a hope that I may ultimately do better, should I continue to write for the stage, (which nothing but an assurance that, with all my defects, I may yet bring some little aid to the drama, at a time when any aid, however humble, ought to be welcome to the lovers of the art, could induce me to do,) may I be permitted to say a few words as to some of the objections which have been made against this play? I pass over the assertion, rashly advanced by some, that it was written with a view to the peculiar acting of Mr. Macready, because it must be clear to any real critic that his part is not even the main character in the play. If it appear

so on the stage, it is thus made, not by the design of the author, but the genius of the actor. The main, and by far the highest, character in the play, is that of Lady Arundel. To this character it has been objected, that her preference for her second son is unnatural, because the elder was the offspring of a love-marriage, and the second of forced and reluctant nuptials. But whoever will take the trouble to look a little more closely to the story will see that this objection is wholly frivolous. Lady Arundel, in relating her own tale, does *not* dwell on her love for her first husband as one of a deep and enduring nature: she says emphatically that “she had *misplaced* her heart”—she implies that her affection had been the fancy of the child rather than the love of the woman—she indulges in none of the tender regrets for the loss of her first husband which would have been natural to the woman who had loved deeply. The leading characteristic of Lady Arundel is pride—pride of her name, her station, her ancestors, her unstained repute: even her love for Percy is the love of the proud rather than the fond mother. It is when Lord Ashdale expresses (Act IV.) haughty and aristocratic, rather than amiable or affectionate, sentiments, that she obtains the victory over her struggling conscience, and exclaims, “I will know no son but him.” For the rest, the naturalness of her prefer-

ence is embodied in the following lines, which the critics have overlooked, and for the truth of which I appeal at once to every mother :—

“ LADY ARUNDEL.

I had a child ! I was a mother ! true :
 But did I dare to dwell upon that thought ?
 In darkness and in secret, if I sought
 The couch it hallow'd—did not my steps creep
 Fearful and shuddering as the tread of crime,
 Which starts at its own shadow ? With that son
 Were woven, not the proud, self-glorying joys
 Which mothers know ; but memory, shame, the dread
 And agony of those who live between
 Evil and its detection. Yet I loved thee—
 I loved thee once !

NORMAN.

I knew it—Heaven, I knew it !

LADY ARUNDEL.

I loved thee till another son was born—
 One who, amidst the sad and desolate world,
 Seem'd sent from Heaven by Mercy. Think, thou wert
 Alien—afar—seen rarely—on strange love
 Leaning for life ;—but this thrice-precious one
 Smiled to my eyes—drew being from my breast—
 Slept in my arms ;—the very tears I shed
 Above my treasure were to men and angels
 Alike such holy sweetness !—food, health, life,
 It clung to me for all !—mother and child,
 Each was the all to each ! ”

It is needless to comment upon the utter unfairness of some critics, who assert that the plot turns on Lady Arundel's "loathing" for Norman. There is no loathing from first to last: it is, even in the second act, a constant struggle, not between hatred and affection, but between *two affections*, one made stronger than the other by the custom and habit of a life. And, to back her reasons for rejecting Norman, it must never be forgotten that there are, besides her love for Percy, all the pride of a woman living in the haughtiest age of English nobility, and every impulse of shame lest a marriage that dishonoured her should be detected, and her scutcheon stained and defaced by the crime of her own father. A specimen of the sort of criticism (!!!) which is brought to bear against me may be found in this. When Norman takes his stand on the hearth of his ancestors, and Lady Arundel, after summoning her menials to eject him, says,

"No ;

My father's lordly mien is his—I dare not"—

an ingenious reviewer argues thus: "And this speech the audience applauded! Observe, Lady Arundel says, not *his* father's lordly mien, but *my* father's—her stern father's, who had murdered her husband, &c.—Can anything be more unnatural?" Why, his father, the lowborn page, had never stood by that hearth as its

lord ! If Norman had looked like *his* father when he claimed his rights, there would have been nothing in his mien to daunt Lady Arundel, and humble her with the sense of his superior authority and power. But, if he looked like *her* father, who alone seems to have awed and subdued her own high spirit, who had been enabled by the terror that accompanied the baronial sway of the lord and sire of the middle ages, after the murder of one husband, to force her to the arms of another, she might, I respectfully contend, have quailed and shrunk before his aspect; and the “I dare not,” which would have been wholly ineffectual and uncharacteristic if he had looked like the lowborn lover, was the natural exclamation of one who thought to see before her the lordly and indignant father.

Another specimen of fair and considerate criticism is found in the following comment upon Norman’s character :—“ He gives up his rights and declaims upon Mammon in one part, and wishes to be a Croesus in another ! ”—this pithy remark being founded on his exclamation of careless joy when he expects to learn the proof of his birth :—

“ Ah, Mistress Prudence, when we meet again,
Poor Captain Norman may be Captain Croesus !
Oh, Violet, birth and wealth were sweet indeed,
If they could make me worthier to possess thee. ”

Even the seaman-like attempt at a joke, rather than the expression of a wish, is (the reader will observe) coupled, not with any thought of his own interest, but of his better claims to the love of his betrothed. And this is what newspaper writers call inconsistency! The character of Norman is not designed for one of intellect, of thought, of reasoning—but of affection, sentiment, and passion. To judge of the sacrifice he makes, and of the moral included in that sacrifice, we must not judge as lawyers or casuists: we must go back to the ethics of the classical drama,—the propriety of setting before the public the nobleness of sacrificing something to others. In the tragic or Greek drama, as in *Iphigenia*, it is *life* that is thus offered up. In this country, and in this day, a moral more wanted is the sacrifice, not of life, but of what most men live for—money and ambition! The experiment of concluding a play with this kind of self-immolation—with a catastrophe that is not physical—with a moral that goes against what is called poetical justice, was hazardous. But something in that Human Nature which stirs through a multitude made it succeed on the stage, in spite of its direct opposition to all vulgar theatrical usages.

It has been said that the character of Norman might have been equally applicable to a land-captain

as a sea-captain: I do not think the sentiments he utters would have been natural except in a seaman. If the gentlemen who write for the newspapers think otherwise, and that they could all have been Normans under similar circumstances, I do not see why they should sneer at his generosity!

“But,” says another reviewer very gravely, “all the adventures are on land!” It would have been a little difficult to have made a play in five acts, with the quarter-deck for a scene! It is a more plausible objection, that Norman is not exactly the rough, rollicking, jolly tar of modern times. But a young man, brought up alone by a learned priest—with a mystery attached to his birth—with deep affectionate yearnings for his home and parents—incited first to the sea by wild tales of those new-discovered lands which had inspired the poetry no less than the enterprise of his own time,—fired by the example of Raleigh,—and serving under that, the most accomplished, courtier and scholar of his age, may well be supposed to be of a different tribe from the heroes of Smollet, and to be something of the cavalier and the poet as well as the adventurous sailor. In contrast with the passion of Norman is the intellect of Sir Maurice Beavor, a character that has puzzled the newspaper folks, but which is, I am convinced, true to nature and to the time. He is not, at heart, a

miser, though the desire of power has made the habits of his life miserly. Had he been a miser, he could not have jested on his own vice. He is the poor cousin, between whom and a noble heritage has stood a woman whom he despises, and on whose sorrows he retaliates the insults that have soured his life. He has been too near to wealth to have betaken himself to the honest resources of poverty ;—whatever talent he may possess has degenerated into cunning, and whatever passion into irritable malice. Covetousness, as Goëthe has well said, is the vice above all others that sharpens the wit and deadens the conscience. Sir Maurice Beavor has no moral principle—no conscience ! He is never sensible of his own villany ! When he has brought his ingenuity to bear on some detestable stratagem, he chuckles over and enjoys it, as the child of his own cleverness. No man lives to overreach others, but at last makes a humorous pleasure of his occupation. Contempt for mankind produces humour in life, as it does in writing. Malignancy is jocular in action when it thinks itself successful, just as it is jocular in the satire of Swift or the mockery of Voltaire. As the poor cousin approaches towards the fancied goal of his desires, his head grows dizzy ; and towards the end of the play, until roused into the latent sentiment and passion of his character

by Lady Arundel's taunts, his cunning verges to dotage. All this I apprehend to be true to nature. I do not say that his character is always agreeable, or that where his villany predominates his humour can be readily enjoyed. But the aim of the Drama is not to paint only what is agreeable, but what is true.* And the meanness and knavery of an able man of strong purpose are not without a moral, when resulting from the opposite qualities that make the generous and tender sailor. an object of sympathy and admiration. I must be pardoned for this disquisition on my own designs. When every means is employed to misrepresent, it becomes, perhaps, allowable to explain. And if I do not think that my faults as a dramatic author are to be found in the study and delineation of character, it is precisely because *that* is the point on which all my previous pursuits in literature and actual life would be most likely to preserve me from the errors I own elsewhere, whether of misjudgment or inexperience.

I have now only to add my thanks to the actors for the zeal and talent with which they have embodied the

* It is, thus, no objection to this play to say that Lady Arundel was an unnatural mother. Shakspeare has drawn portraits of daughters infinitely more unnatural. An unnatural mother or an unnatural daughter may be a perfectly natural character.

characters intrusted to them. The sweetness and grace with which Miss Faucit embellished the part of Violet, which, though only a sketch, is most necessary to the colouring and harmony of the play,* were perhaps the more pleasing to the audience from the generosity, rare with actors, which induced her to take a part so inferior to her powers. The applause which attends the performance of Mrs. Warner and Mr. Strickland attests their success in characters of unusual difficulty ; while the singular beauty and nobleness, whether of conception or execution, with which the greatest of living actors has elevated the part of Norman (so totally different from his ordinary range of character) is a new proof of his versatility and accomplishment in all that belongs to his art. It would be scarcely gracious to conclude these remarks without expressing my acknowledgment of that generous and indulgent sense of justice which, forgetting all political differences in a

* As a proof how little persons who cavil think it necessary to read before they criticise, one reviewer makes it a great objection to Norman's generosity that he burns the proofs without consulting his bride! The one great effect in Violet's part—in the play as written—being the very lines in which, *before* Norman has resolved upon anything, she herself is made to suggest to him the course he afterwards pursues—

“We are young, we love each other!

We do not want titles and gold, my Norman!”

literary arena, has enabled me to appeal to approving audiences—from hostile critics. And it is this which alone encourages me to the hope that, sooner or later, I may add to the dramatic literature of my country something that may find perhaps almost as many friends in the next age as it has been the fate of the author to find enemies in this.

THE SEA-CAPTAIN;

OR,

THE BIRTHRIGHT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The exterior of a small inn by the sea-coast; the Castle of Arundel at a distance; a boat drawn on the beach; a ship at anchor. The door of the inn is open, and discovers FALKNER and Sailors carousing within. Before a table in front of the stage—GILES GAUSSEN seated. Time, forenoon.

LANDLORD (*serving GAUSSEN, with a flask, &c.*)

IF this be not the best Canaries on the coast, I give thee leave to drown me in my own butt. But it is dull work drinking alone, master;—wilt join the jolly fellows within?

GAUSSEN.

Nc. .

LANDLORD.

A bluff customer. If his reckonings be as short as

his answers, he is not likely to die in debt to his landlord.

[*Exit Landlord within the inn.*]

GAUSSEN.

Luke should be returned ere this; Sir Maurice would be eager eno' to see his old friend if he knew what news in the way of shot I carry in my locker. Humph! Sir Walter Raleigh is a great man—and introduced tobacco! (*smokes.*)

SAILORS (*within*).

Ha, ha!

GAUSSEN.

To the foul fiend with those drunken sailors! Had I known what kind of guests my fat landlord harboured I should hardly have put into this port: I hate honest men: what right have men to be honest and spoil other men's trade?

Enter LUKE.

Ha, Luke! what says the old knight?

LUKE.

Mighty little, but he is close at my heels. He carries back his own answer, to save portorage, I suppose. Thou mightst well call him a miser—not a tester for my trouble. His very face is like a board to warn men off the premises of his breeches' pockets.

GAUSSEN.

Where are our crew?

LUKE.

Rambling through the town yonder, and picking up

stray news of what ships sail and what their cargo.
They are keen scouts.

GAUSSEN.

Go, select twelve of the stoutest ; stow them away in the sea-cave that I told thee of, below the castle yonder. I may find work for them ere nightfall.—Hark ye, Luke. If thou hadst done a man such wrong that thy life lay at his mercy, what wouldst thou ?

LUKE.

Take the first dark night for a spring from the bush, and keep my knife ground.

GAUSSEN.

I like thy advice.—Hence !

[*Exit* LUKE.]

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

What, Giles Gaussen—bully Gaussen, my heart of oak ; how fares it ? Why, it is ten years since we met. I thought thou wert in another land.—(*Aside*) I wish thou wert in another world. You are a little altered—warlike wounds, eh ? All for the better—more grim, terrible, manly, and seamanlike.

GAUSSEN.

I must thank the boy whom I took out to please thee for this gash across the brow.

SIR MAURICE.

Ugh ! it is by no means a handsome keepsake, bully Gaussen. What, then ? you are quits with him. You

gave him a very large winding-sheet,—one that will not wear out this many a day, eh ?

GAUSSEN.

No ; he has escaped—he lives ! I saw him yesterday—a day's journey hence. It is this which brings me hither. I have tracked news of him. He bears another name—Norman ! He has a goodly ship of his own. Look yonder (*pointing to the ship*). Does this news open your purse-strings, Sir Maurice ?

SIR MAURICE.

Thou traitor ! Hadst thou not five hundred broad pieces—bright, new, gold broad pieces ? I recollect the face of every one of them as if it were my own child's ;—and all, all that thou mightst never say to me “ He lives.”

GAUSSEN.

Hist !

Enter FALKNER and Sailors from the inn.

FALKNER.

Yes, steady, lads, steady. The Captain will be here anon—it is the hour he fixed. Avast there, messmate ! Thou seem'st one of our cloth. Dost want a berth in the Royal Eliza, under the bold Captain Norman ?

GAUSSEN (*aside to SIR MAURICE*).

Norman—you hear ?

SIR MAURICE.

You serve under Captain Norman, worthy sir ?—Do you expect him soon this way, worthy sir ?

FALKNER.

This instant, worthy sir! I am his lieutenant, worthy sir. Faith, you shall drink his health.

SIR MAURICE.

Zounds, sir! what is his health to me? It is as much as a man of my age can do to drink his own health. This way, Gaussen; quick—tell me more—tell me more. Good day to you, master lieutenant.

[*Exeunt* SIR M. and GAUSSEN.]

FALKNER.

Good day to you both—and an ill wind go with you! By the Lord, messmates, a man who refuses to drink, without a satisfactory explanation, is to my mind a very suspicious character.

SAILOR.

Hurrah for the Captain! hurrah!

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

Well met, lads! beshrew me but the sound of your jolly welcome is the merriest music I've heard since we parted. Have ye spent all your doubloons?

FIRST SAILOR.

Pretty nearly, Captain.

NORMAN.

That's right—we shall be all the lighter in sailing! Away to the town—and get rid of these pieces for me. Off; but be back an hour before sunset.

[*Exeunt* Sailors.]

What should I do with all this prize-money
If it were not for those brave fellows?—faith,
They take a world of trouble off one's hands !
How fares it, Falkner?—thou hast seen thy home?—
All well?—

FALKNER.

All well ! my poor old father, bless him,
Had known reverse—he tills another's land,
And crops had fail'd. Oh, man, I was so happy
To pour my Indian gold into his lap,
And cry “Your sailor son has come to drive
Want from his father's door !”

NORMAN.

That hour were worth
A life of toil!—well, and thy mother?—I
Have never known one—but I love to see
A man's eyes moisten and his colour change
When on his lips lingers the sweet name “MOTHER !”
Thy mother bless'd thee !

FALKNER.

Scarce with words;—but tears
And lifted hands, and lips that smiled dear thanks
To the protecting Heaven—*these* bless'd me !

NORMAN.

Friend,
I envy thee!—

FALKNER.

Eno' of me—now for thyself, what news ?
Thy Floweret of the West—thy fair betroth'd—
The maid we rescued from the Afric corsair

With her brave father—in the Indian seas—
Thou'st seen her?—

NORMAN.

No!—I had more wisely, saved
My time and speed. Her sire is dead—the stranger
Sits at his hearth; and with her next of kin
Hard by this spot—this very spot—dear Falkner,
My Violet dwells: look where the sunlight gilds
The time-worn towers of stately Arundel—
Thither my steps are bound;—a happy chance
Our trysting-place should have been chosen here!—
I'd not have gone one bowshot from the path
That leads my soul to bask in Violet's eyes—
No, not for all the lands my journey traversed,
Nor—what is more—for the best ship that ever
Bore the plumed Victory o'er the joyous main.

[*Going out.*]

FALKNER.

Hold—but the priest, thy foster-father, Onslow—
Hast thou sought *him*?

NORMAN.

Thou dear old man, forgive me!
I do believe as whirlpools to the sea
Love is to life!—Since first I leapt on land
I have had no thought—no dream—no fear—no hope
Which the absorbing waves of one strong passion
Have not engulfed!—Wilt serve me Falkner?—Bear
This letter to the priest—the place inscribed
Scarce two hours' journey hence;—say I will seek him
Perchance this night—if not, the morrow's dawn.

Let all good news be glad upon thy tongue—
How I am well—strong—gay—how every night—
Mark—tell him this—(good men at home are apt
To judge us seamen harshly)—every night
On the far seas his foster-son recall'd
The words he taught my infant lips,—and pray'd
Blessings on that grey head.

FALKNER.

I'll do thy bidding.

NORMAN.

So now to Violet.

FALKNER.

Hark!—thy men are true—
Thy ship at hand: if she say “ay”—hoist sail,
Off with the prize. I prithee, is she rich?—

NORMAN.

Her sire died poor—thank Heaven, she is *not* rich!

FALKNER.

I'm glad to hear it—Had she lands and beeves,
And gold, you might forswear the sea.

NORMAN.

The sea!

No—not for Beauty's self! the glorious sea—
Where England grasps the trident of a god,
And every breeze pays homage to her flag,
And every wave hears Neptune's choral nymphs
Hymn with immortal music England's name!—
Forswear the sea! My bark shall be our home;—
The gale shall chaunt our bridal melodies;—

The stars that light the angel palaces
Of air, our lamps ;—our floors the crystal deep
Studded with sapphires sparkling as we pass ;—
Our roof—all Heaven !—my Beautiful, my Own !
Never did sail more gladly glide to port
Than I to thee ! my anchor in thy faith,
And in thine eyes my haven.—

Farewell, Falkner.

[*Exeunt* NORMAN and FALKNER at opposite sides.]

SCENE II.

The Gardens of the Castle of Arundel.

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

It is the day—now five-and-twenty years
Elapsed—the anniversary day of woe !
O Sun, thou art the all-piercing eye of Heaven,
And to thy gaze my heart's dark caves lie bare
With their unnatural secret.—Silence, Conscience !
Have I not rank—power—wealth—unstain'd repute ?
So will I wrap my ermine round the past,
And—Ah—he comes ! my son—my noble boy,
I see thee, and air brightens !—

LORD ASHDALE (*speaking without to Servants*).

Yes—old Rowland !—

And, stay, be sure the falcon which my Lord
Of Leicester sent me. We will try his metal.

Enter ASHDALE.

Good morrow, mother—Hum—methought that Violet
Were here. Well! what with *you* and Mistress
Prudence,
That virgin legacy of starch and buckram
Which Violet's father (rest his soul!) bequeath'd her,
I might as well be cousinless.

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son,
She is no bride for Arundel's young heir.

ASHDALE.

Who spoke of brides?—Can we not gaze on Beauty
Save by the torch of Hymen?—To be gallant—
Breathe out a score of sighs, or vows, or sonnets—
Mirror the changes in that Heaven called “Woman”—
And smooth our language to a dainty sadness;—
All this—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Is love!—

ASHDALE.

No—No—*amusement*, mother.
The pastoral recreation of the groves
Where birds and shepherds dissipate their dulness
By the sweet pastime amorous poets sing of.
You take this matter far too solemnly;
I own I would abridge the days—the days (*yawning*)
Are wondrous lengthy in the country, mother—
By practising the bow of Cupid, just

To keep one's hand in, with my blush-faced cousin !
How does this plume become me ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Well ! yet I
Would have it sweep less loosely.

ASHDALE.

Now-a-days
Our love is worn just as I wear this plume,
A glancing feather, gay with every wind,
And playing o'er a light and giddy brain
Such as your son's—(*kissing her hand*)—Let the
plume play, sweet mother !

LADY ARUNDEL (*fondly*).

Ah ! Percy, Percy !

ASHDALE.

Well, I hear my steed
Neighing impatience, and the silver bells
On my dark falcon shaking their own gladness
Into the limber air ;—the sun will halt
Midway in heaven ere my return ; meanwhile,
If you would keep me faithful to your hand,
Give me my wings—in other words (now, frown not),
The court, the camp, or any life but this,
If my fair cousin saddens all my sunshine
With eyes so coldly gentle ;—fare you well.

[*Exit* ASHDALE.]

LADY ARUNDEL.

Too light—too vain for his ancestral honours—

And yet, what mother does not love her son
Best for the faults she chides in him ?

Enter VIOLET and MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

My Violet,
Why still this pensive brow—this garb of grief ?

VIOLET.

Lady, I am an orphan !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Nay, take comfort.—

Yet is there not a softer sorrow, Violet,
In thy meek eyes than that which bathes with tears
A father's holy urn ? Thou turn'st away—
(*Angrily*)—Does thy gaze rove for Ashdale ?

Girl, beware—

The love that trifles round the charms it gilds
Oft ruins while it shines.

VIOLET.

You can speak thus,
Yet bid me grieve not that I am an orphan !

LADY ARUNDEL (*touched*).

Forgive me, I was hasty !—No, you do not—
Say it—you do not love my graceless Percy ?

VIOLET.

You know that I have shunn'd him !—I am poor ;
But Poverty is proud (*aside*), and Memory faithful.

LADY ARUNDEL (*as to herself*).

• I have high hopes for Ashdale—bright desires—
Wild schemes—the last son of a race whose lords

Have sought their mates beside the hearth of kings,
He stands before me as a dream of glory,
Haunting some young ambition ; and mine eyes
Pierce to the future, when these bones are dust,
And see him princeliest of the lion tribe
Whose swords and coronals gleam around the throne,
The guardian stars of the Imperial Isle.
Kings shall revere his mother !

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE (*aside to* LADY ARUNDEL).

Hark ! he lives !

LADY ARUNDEL.

He ! who ?

SIR MAURICE.

The young gentleman who stands between your
Percy and his inheritance ! Ugh, ugh ! (*coughing*).
It is very cold. (*To* MISTRESS PRUDENCE.) Suppose
you take a walk with your fair charge, Mistress Pru-
dence ; and, not to waste your time, you can pray for
grace to spin me a pair of lambs-wool stockings against
Michaelmas.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Stockings, Sir Maurice ! Marry, come up ; *is* that
a delicate allusion ?

[*Walks up the stage with* VIOLET.

SIR MAURICE (*to* LADY ARUNDEL).

I tell thee,—he lives ; he is at hand ; no longer a
babe, a child, a helpless boy ; but a stout man, with a

ship, and a name, and a crew,—and money, for what I know. Your son Percy is a fine youth. It is a pity his father married before, and had other sons. But for your Lordships of Ashdale and Arundel, your Percy would be as poor—as poor as old Maurice Beever. The air is very keen. Poverty is subject to ague (*shivers*), and to asthma (*wheezes*), and to cold rheums and catarrhs (*sneezes*), and to pains in the loins, lumbago, and sciatica (*rubbs himself*); and when Poverty begs, the dogs bark at it; and when Poverty is ill, the doctors mangle it; and when Poverty is dying, the priests scold at it; and when Poverty is dead, nobody weeps for it. If this young man prove his case, your son, Percy Ashdale, will be very poor!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son, my Percy! but the priest is faithful. He has sworn——

SIR MAURICE.

To keep thy secret only while thy father and thy spouse lived: they are dead. But the priest has no proofs to back his tale?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Alas! he has.

SIR MAURICE.

He has! Why did you never tell me that before?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Because—because (*aside*) I feared thy avarice more than the priest's conscience.

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

Hum! she must come to me for aid now. I will get these proofs. Under the surface of this business I see a great many gold and silver fishes. Hum! I will begin to angle!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My own thoughts confuse me. What should be done?

SIR MAURICE.

I know a nice little farm to be sold on the other side of the river Ex; but I am very poor—a very poor old knight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do you trifle with me? What is your counsel?

SIR MAURICE.

There is a great deal of game on it; partridges, hares, wild geese, snipes, and plovers (*smacking his lips*); besides a magnificent preserve of sparrows, which I can always sell to the little blackguards in the streets for a penny a hundred. But I am very poor—a very poor old knight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Within, within! You shall have gold—what you will; we must meet this danger!

SIR MAURICE.

If she had said “gold” at first, I should have saved

exactly one minute and three quarters ! Madam, I follow you. Never fear, I will secure the proofs.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I dreamed of him last night ; a fearful dream !

[*Exit* LADY ARUNDEL *within the house*.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE *and* VIOLET *advance*.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

The old miser ! See how I will chafe him. (*To* SIR MAURICE, *curtsying very low*.) Worshipful Sir Maurice, may I crave your blessing ?

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

I never heard of a man being asked to give his blessing who was not expected to give something else along with it. (*Aloud*.) Chut, chut ! what do you want with a blessing, you elderly heathen ?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Why, it does not cost anything.

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

That's a jibe at my poverty. Every fool has a stone for the poor. (*Aloud*.) Does not cost anything ! Does it *bring in* anything ? What will you give for it ?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

This ribbon.

SIR MAURICE (*taking the ribbon*).

Hum ! it will do for a shoe-tie. There, bless you,

and mend you, and incline your sinful old heart to my lambs'-wool stockings ! Do you want to be blessed too, child ?

VIOLET.

Nay, indeed, sir !

SIR MAURICE.

The girls grow pertter every day ! That hypocritical Jezabel looks all the merrier for my benediction. I am afraid she has got a bargain out of me.

[Exit within the house.]

Manent VIOLET—MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Now would I give my best peach-coloured padusoy to know why that malicious old miser has so mighty an influence with the Lady of Arundel.

VIOLET.

You forget he is her relative ; nay, failing Lord Ashdale, the heir-at-law to the estates of Arundel. —Ah, Mistress Prudence, how shall I thank thee for aiding me to baffle the unwelcome suit of this young lord ?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Dear child, I am amply repaid for it by my own conscience—(*aside*) and the young lord's mother. You sigh, sweetheart—thinking still of your absent sailor ?

VIOLET.

When do I cease to think of him ?—and now that my poor father is gone, more than ever. His pride

might have forbid my union with one of obscure birth—
but now—

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

He is indeed a cavalier of very comely presence !
How noble he looked the day he leaped on board the
Corsair—with his bold crew shouting round him—
“ England and Elizabeth—Norman to the rescue ! ” I
think I see him now—his eyes flashing through the
smoke. Ah, lady-bird, but for him we two innocent
virgins would have been put up for sale in the Beauty-
Market at Tunis ! Why, you don’t hear a word I say.
Well, if you like solitude, as the young lord is abroad
for the forenoon, I will leave you awhile ; I have my
great tapestry-work of the loves of King Solomon and
Queen Sheba to finish ; and when one has ceased to feel
love it is a comfort at least to create it—in tent-stitch.

[*Exit.*

VIOLET.

O for some fairy talisman to conjure
Up to these longing eyes the form they pine for !
And yet in love there’s no such word as absence !
The loved one, like our guardian spirit, walks
Beside us ever,—shines upon the beam—
Perfumes the flower—and sighs in every breeze !
Its presence gave such beauty to the world
That all things beautiful its likeness are ;
And aught in sound most sweet, to sight most fair,
Breathes with its voice, or like its aspect smiles.

Enter NORMAN.

There spoke my fancy, not my heart !—Where art thou,
My unforgotten Norman ?

NORMAN.

At thy feet !

Oh, have I lived to see thee once again ?

Breathe the same air ?—my own, my blessed one !

Look up—look up—these are the arms which shelter'd

When the storm howl'd around ; and these the lips

Where, till this hour, the sad and holy kiss

Of parting linger'd—as the fragrance left

By angels when they touch the earth and vanish.

Look up—Night never panted for the sun

As for thine eyes, my soul !—

VIOLET.

Thrice joyous day !

My Norman !—is it thou, indeed ?—my Norman !

NORMAN.

Look up, look up, my Violet—weeping ? fie !

And trembling too—yet leaning on my breast.

In truth thou art too soft for such rude shelter !

Look up—I come to woo thee to the seas,

My sailor's bride—hast thou no voice but blushes ?

Nay—from those roses let me, like the bee,

Drag forth the secret sweetness !—

VIOLET.

Oh, what thoughts

Were kept for speech when we once more should meet,

Now blotted from the page—and all I feel

Is—*Thou* art with me !—

NORMAN.

Not to part again.

Enter MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

What do I see ?—I thought that I heard voices !
Why, Captain Norman !—It must be his ghost !

NORMAN.

Ah, my fair governante !—By this hand,
And this most chaste salute, I'm flesh and blood !

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Fie, Captain, fie ! But pray be gone—The Countess—
If she should come—

NORMAN.

Oh, then I am a ghost !

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Still the same merry gentleman ! But think
Of my responsibilities. What would
The Countess say, if I allowed myself
To see a stranger speaking to her ward ?

NORMAN.

See, Mistress Prudence ?—oh, if that be all,
What see you *now* ?

[Clapping a piece of gold to the left eye.]

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Why, nothing with the left eye—
The right has still a morbid sensibility !

NORMAN.

Poor thing !—this golden ointment soon will cure it !

[Clapping another piece of gold to the right eye.]

What see you now, my Prudence ?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Not a soul !

NORMAN (*aside*).

Faith, 'tis a mercy on a poor man's purse
That some old ladies were not born with three eyes !

[PRUDENCE *goes up the stage*.

VIOLET.

Nay, my own Norman—nay !—You heard no step ?
This awful woman—

NORMAN.

Woman ! a sweet word !
Too sweet for terror, Violet !—

VIOLET.

You know not
The Dame of Arundel—her *name* has terror !
Men whisper sorcery where her dark eye falls ;
Her lonely lamp outlives Night's latest star,
And o'er her beauty some dark memory glooms,
Too proud for penitence—too stern for sorrow.—
Ah ! my lost father !—

NORMAN.

Violet, thou and I
Perchance are orphans *both* upon the earth :
So turn we both from earth to that great mother
(The only parent I have known), whose face
Is bright with gazing ever on the stars—
The Mother Sea ;—and for our Father, Violet,
We'll look for *Him* in heaven !

[*They go up the stage.*]

Enter LADY ARUNDEL *and* SIR MAURICE.

[MISTRESS PRUDENCE *creeps off*.

LADY ARUNDEL.

It must be so !—

There is no other course !

SIR MAURICE.

Without the proofs

The old man's story were but idle wind—

This rude but hunger-witted rascal shall

To Onslow's house—seize on the proofs—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Quick !—quick !—

See to it quick, good kinsman !

[*Exit* SIR MAURICE.]

Re-enter NORMAN *and* VIOLET.

VIOLET.

It is she !

Meet her not—nay, you know not her proud temper !

NORMAN.

Pshaw for her pride !—present me boldly !—'Sdeath !

Blush you for me ?—He who's a king on deck

Is every subject's equal on the land.

I will advance !

LADY ARUNDEL (*turning suddenly*).

Avenging angels, spare me !

NORMAN.

Pardon the seeming boldness of my presence.

VIOLET.

Our gallant countryman, of whom my father
So often spoke, who from the Algerine
Rescued our lives and freedom.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ah!—your name, sir.

NORMAN.

A humble name, fair lady ;—Norman.

LADY ARUNDEL.

So !

Arm me, thou genius of all women—Craft !
Sir, you are welcome. Walk within and hold
Our home a hostel while it lists you.

NORMAN.

Madam,

'Twill be a thought for pride in distant times
To have been your guest.

LADY ARUNDEL.

He knows not what I am.

I will forfend all peril. Fair sir, follow.

[Re-enters the Castle.]

VIOLET.

Strange—Norman !

NORMAN.

What ?



VIOLET.

I never knew her yet
So courteous to a stranger.

NORMAN.

Ah, sweet lass !
I told thee right. We Princes of the Sea
Are no such despicable gallants, eh ?
O thought of joy !—one roof to shelter both,—
To see thee, hear thee, touch thy hand, and glide
By thy dear side adown the blessed time !
A most majestic lady !—her sweet face
Made my heart tremble, and call'd back old dreams
Of——Well—Has she a son ?

VIOLET.

Ah, yes !

NORMAN.

In truth
A happy man !

VIOLET.

Yet he might envy thee !

NORMAN.

Most arch reprover, yes !—as kings themselves
Might envy one whose arm entwines thee thus !

[Exeunt within the Castle.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room in the Castle.

Enter Servant, preceding SIR MAURICE.

SERVANT (*insolently*).

You can take a seat, Sir Maurice; my Lady is engaged. She will see you when her leisure suits.

SIR MAURICE.

What a modest, respectful, civil fellow it is! you know behaviour to a man of quality, I see; if I did not fear to corrupt thy morals, by this light I would give thee a penny.

SERVANT (*half aside*).

"A man of quality!"—a beggarly poor cousin—marry, come up! [*Exit.*]

SIR MAURICE.

Ah, there it is, a beggarly poor cousin!
Up from my cradle, a poor beggarly cousin!
Butt for my Lord—convenience for my Lady—
Jibe for the lackey. And men blame Sir Maurice
For loving gold!—My youth was drudged away
In penury and dependence—manhood went
In piling wealth that age might mount to power.
How the sleek rogues would fawn on the poor cousin

If they could peep into his money-chest !
Let Gaussen get the proofs, and half the lands
Of this proud Countess scarce shall wring them from
me !

Then let the spendthrift Percy be the heir,
I'll get the other half in mortgages,
Loans, and *post obits*. Ha, ha ! who will then be
The beggarly poor cousin ?

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

I've despatch'd
Gaussen to Onslow's house—Well, why so pale ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

He is beneath my roof—this youth, this Norman—
My guest !

SIR MAURICE.

Your guest ! (*vindictively*)—The fly is in the web !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Scarce had you left, when, lo ! he stood before me.
I knew him ere he spoke—his father's eyes
Look'd me to stone in his—I did not swoon,
I did not tremble !

SIR MAURICE.

Chut, chut ! you dissembled
Of course—you are a woman !

LADY ARUNDEL.

What dark perils
Gather around me now !

SIR MAURICE (*whispering*).

Remove him then
While yet 'tis time.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Remove?—thy stealthy voice
Curdles my veins. Remove him?—yes; I have
A scheme to make all safe. I learn, thro' Prudence,
That he loves Violet—woo'd her months ago
In the far Indian seas. 'Twas he who saved her
When, homeward from the isle her father govern'd,
Their ship was captured by the Algerine.

SIR MAURICE (*impatiently*).

Well, well;—I see—you will befriend the suit?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ay, and promote the flight!—To some fair clime
In the New World the hurrying seas shall waft them,
And I shall sleep in peace.

SIR MAURICE.

He loves the girl!
What will thy Percy say—Hotspur the Second—
When he discovers——

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ere he learn the love,
Their bark is on the deep. I dare not tarry.
He is return'd—is with them now—a spark
Would fire his jealous humour. Be at hand,
Lest I may need thy aid.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou'rt on the abyss !

LADY ARUNDEL.

But my brain reels not, and my step is firm !

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

In love with Violet ! I see, I see ;
I'll set this fiery Percy on his rival.
If one should perish by the sword, the other
Dies by the law. Thanks to these proofs, I'll make
The rival's contest seem the assassin's snare.
Ha, ha ! were these men dead, I should be heir
To Arundel and Ashdale. For the Countess—
The worm's already at her heart ! Ah, shall I
Then be a miser ?—Ho, there ! my Lord's lackeys !—
Room for the Earl of Arundel ! You dined
With the Earl yesterday ? A worthy Lord !
I'll marry a young bride, get heirs, and keep
A lean poor cousin of my own to play
At leapfrog with the little Maurices.

Enter LORD ASHDALE (*in disorder*).

ASHDALE.

By Heavens ! this stranger's insolence would fire
An anchorite's patience. 'Sdeath ! his hand press'd hers,
His breathing fann'd her locks.

SIR MAURICE.

How now, my Hector,
My diamond, apple of my eye ? How now ?—
Chafed, vexed ?

ASHDALE.

Home, home, Anatomy, and drive
The mice from thy larder.

SIR MAURICE.

Mice !—Zounds, how can I
Keep mice ?—I can't afford it—they were starved
To death an age ago !—the last was found,
Come Christmas three years, stretched beside a bone
In that same larder—so consumed and worn
By pious fast—'twas awful to behold it !
I canonized its corpse in spirits of wine,
And set it in the porch—a solemn warning
To thieves and beggars. (*Aside*) Shall I be avenged—
Shall I—for this ? Come, come, my pretty Percy ;
I'll tell thee why thou strid'st about a lion :—
Dogs would invade thy bone. This stranger loves
Thy Violet.

ASHDALE.

Loves her !

SIR MAURICE.

And will win her too—
Unless I help thee—for (but mum !—no word of it)
Thy mother backs his suit.—Thou art no match
My innocent Percy, for a single woman ;
But two—a virgin and a widow—would
Have made King Solomon himself a ninny.

ASHDALE.

All Egypt's plagues confound this fellow ! Deaf
Ev'n to affront.—He wards off all my taunts

With a blunt, sailorlike, and damn'd good humour
That makes me seem, ev'n to myself, less like
An angry rival than a saucy clown.

SIR MAURICE.

Be cool—he cool now—take a walk with me,
And talk upon it.

ASHDALE.

Wilt thou really serve me ?

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, and for nothing too!—you patient saints
Make miracles. Ha, ha! you like a jest
On old Sir Maurice. All men joke upon
The poor old cousin—ha, ha, ha!—Come, Hotspur.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*A Gothic hall.—On one side a huge hearth, over which
a scutcheon and old banners; the walls hung
with armour and ancient portraits.—In the front of
the stage a table spread with fruits and wine.*

LADY ARUNDEL—NORMAN—VIOLET.

NORMAN.

Ha, ha! in truth we made a scurvy figure
After our shipwreck.

LADY ARUNDEL.

You jest merrily
At your misfortunes !

NORMAN.

'Tis the way with sailors ;
Still in extremes. I can be sad sometimes.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your wanderings have been long : your sight will bless
Your parents ?

NORMAN.

Ah ! I never knew that word.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your voice has sorrow in its calm. If I
In aught could serve you, trust me !

VIOLET.

Trust her, Norman.

Methinks in the sad tale of thy young years
There's that which makes a friend, wherever Pity
Lives, in the heart of woman.

NORMAN (*to* LADY ARUNDEL).

Gentle lady,
The key of some charm'd music in your voice
Unlocks a long-closed chamber in my soul ;
And would you listen to an outcast's tale,
'Tis briefly told. Until my fourteenth year,
Beneath the roof of an old village priest,
Nor far from hence, my childhood wore away.

Then waked within me anxious thoughts and deep.
Throughout the liberal and melodious nature
Something seem'd absent—what I scarcely knew—
Till one calm night, when over earth and wave
Heaven look'd its love from all its numberless stars—
Watchful yet breathless—suddenly the sense
Of my sweet want swell'd in me, and I ask'd
The priest, *why I was motherless!*

LADY ARUNDEL.

And he?

NORMAN.

Wept as he answered, "I was nobly born!"

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

The traitor!

NORMAN.

And that time would bring the hour,
As yet denied, when from a dismal past
Would dawn a luminous future. As he spake
There gleam'd across my soul a dim remembrance
Of a pale face in infancy beheld—
A shadowy face, but from whose lips there breathed
The words that none but mothers murmur!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh,

My heart, be still!

NORMAN.

'Twas at that time there came
Into our hamlet a rude, jovial seaman,

With the frank mien boys welcome, and wild tales
Of the far Indian lands, from which mine ear
Drank envious wonder. Brief—his legends fired me,
And from the deep, whose billows wash'd the shore
On which our casements look'd, I heard a voice
That woo'd me to its bosom : Raleigh's fame,
The New World's marvels, then made old men heroes,
And young men dreamers ! So I left my home
With that wild seaman.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ere you left, the priest
Said nought to make less dark your lineage ?

NORMAN.

No ;
Nor did he chide my ardour. " Go," he said ;
" Win for thyself a name that pride may envy,
And pride, which is thy foe, will own thee yet !"

LADY ARUNDEL.

I breathe more freely !

NORMAN.

Can you heed thus gently
The stranger's tale ? Your colour comes and goes.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your story moves me much : pray you, resume.

NORMAN.

The villain whom I trusted, when we reached
The bark he ruled, cast me to chains and darkness,

And so to sea. At length, no land in sight,
His crew, dark swarthy men—the refuse crimes
Of many lands—for he, it seems, a pirate)—
Call'd me on deck—struck off my fetters: “ Boy,”
He said, and grimly smiled; “ not mine the wrong:
Thy chains are forged from gold, the gold of those
Who gave thee birth!”

LADY ARUNDEL.

A lie! a hideous lie!

Be sure a lie!

NORMAN.

I answer'd so, and wrench'd
From his own hand the blade it bore, and struck
The slanderer to my feet. With that a shout,
A hundred knives gleam'd round me; but the pirate,
Wiping the gore from his gash'd brow, cried, “ Hold;
Such death were mercy.”—Then they grip'd and bound
me
To a slight plank: spread to the wind their sails;
And left me on the waves alone with God!

VIOLET (*taking his hand*).

My heart melts in my eyes:—and HE preserved thee!

NORMAN.

That day, and all that night, upon the seas
Toss'd the frail barrier between life and death.
Heaven lull'd the gales; and, when the stars came forth,
All look'd so bland and gentle that I wept,
Recall'd that wretch's words, and murmur'd, “ Wave

And wind are kinder than a parent." Lady,
Dost *thou* weep also ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do I ? Nay, go on !

NORMAN.

Day dawn'd, and, glittering in the sun, behold
A sail—a flag !

VIOLET.

Well, well.

NORMAN.

It pass'd away,
And saw me not. Noon, and then thirst and famine ;
And, with parch'd lips, I call'd on death, and sought
To wrench my limbs from the stiff cords that gnaw'd
Into the flesh, and drop into the deep ;
And then methought I saw, beneath the clear
And crystal lymph, a dark, swift-moving thing,
With watchful glassy eyes,—the ocean-monster
That follows ships for prey. Then life once more
Grew sweet, and with a strain'd and horrent gaze,
And lifted hair, I floated on, till sense
Grew dim and dimlier, and a terrible sleep—
In which still—still—those livid eyes met mine—
Fell on me, and——

VIOLET.

Go on !

NORMAN.

I woke, and heard
My native tongue. Kind looks were bent upon me :
I lay on deck—escaped the ghastly death ;
For God had watch'd the sleeper !

VIOLET (*half aside*).

My own Norman !

NORMAN.

'Twas a brave seaman, who with Raleigh served,
That own'd the ship. Beneath his fostering eyes
I fought and labour'd upward. At his death—
[A death, may such be mine!—a hero's death!—
The blue flag waving o'er the victory won!]
He left me the sole heir to all his wealth,—
Some sacks of pistoles—his good frigate—and
His honest name ! (*To VIOLET.*) Fair maid, the
happiest deed
That decks my life *thou* knowest !

LADY ARUNDEL.

And the priest :
Hast thou not seen him since ye parted ?

NORMAN.

No ;
But two short days return'd to these dear shores.
(*Aside to VIOLET.*) Those eyes the guiding stars by
which I steer'd.

[VIOLET *and* NORMAN *converse apart.*

LADY ARUNDEL (*gazing on them*).

He loves—yes, *there* my hope ! Ha ! Percy's voice !
I must beguile or blind *him*. One day more,
And all is safe. Fair Sir, anon I join you.

[*Exit.*

VIOLET.

And thou hast loved me thus ?

NORMAN.

Thus, Violet ; nay,—
For when had true love words for *all* its secrets ?
In some sweet night, becalm'd upon the deep,
The blue air breathless in the starry peace,
After long silence, hush'd as heaven, but fill'd
With happy thoughts as heaven with angels, thou
Shalt lift thine eyes to mine, and with a glance
Learn how the lonely love !

VIOLET.

Not lonely, Norman :
Not lonely, henceforth : *I* shall be with thee !
Where'er thou goest, my soul is ; and thy love
Has grown life's life. To see thee, hear thee, dream
Of thee when absent—to bear all—brave all—
By thy dear side ;—*this* has become my nature—
Thy shadow, deepening as thy day declines,
And dying when thou settest.

NORMAN.

Heaven desert me
If by one cold look I should ever chill
The woman heart within thee !

VIOLET.

So, my Norman,
In cloud, or sunshine—labour as repose—
Meek tho' I be, and lowly,—thou shalt find
This courage of my sex, that bears all change
Save change in thee—and never breathes one murmur,
Unless it be a prayer to guard my Norman !

NORMAN.

My bride—my blessing—my adored !

Enter ASHDALE.

ASHDALE.

Gramercy !
I well escaped to meet my lady mother !
This tale of the old knight has fired my blood.
I would not see her in this mood—

(turning and perceiving VIOLET and NORMAN)

By heavens !

Whispering !—so close !—

(approaching) Familiar sir—excuse me :
I do not see the golden spurs of knighthood—

NORMAN *(aside)*.

These landsmen, who would shake if the wind blew,
Are mighty quarrelsome. The golden spurs !

He thinks we ride on horseback thro' the seas !
Alas ! we sailors have not so much gold
That we should waste it on our heels.

ASHDALE.

D'ye jest, sir ?

VIOLET.

Oh cousin, fie !

ASHDALE (*mimicking her*).

Oh cousin, fie !—sir, mark me :
There's one too many present—

NORMAN (*aside*).

On my life
I think with him !—he might remove the objection !—

ASHDALE.

Good Master Norman, in the seneschal's hall
You'll find your equals.

NORMAN.

Haughty lord, not so.
He who calls me his equal first must prove
His arm as strong—his blade as keen—his heart
As calm in peril !—tush ! put up thy sword.
He *not* my equal who insults his guest,
And seeks his safety in the eyes of woman.

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

VIOLET.

Protect your guest from your rash son !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Lord Ashdale—

These humours wrong your birth. To you, sir stranger,
Have I in aught so fail'd that in the son
You should rebuke the mother ?

NORMAN.

Ask your son

If I was prompt to answer scorn by strife

ASHDALE.

Nay, it is true, more prompt in taking licence
Than courting chastisement !

NORMAN.

You hear him, lady.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ashdale, be ruled—my best beloved—my child,
Forbear—you—

ASHDALE (*quickly*).

Learn'd in childhood from my mother
To brook no rival, and to fear no foe !
I am too old to alter now. Observe me :
You thwart my suit to Violet—you defend
This insolent stranger. Mother, take my counsel :
Despatch him hence and straight, or, by mine honour,
Blood will be shed.—Beware !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Blood ! blood ! whose blood ?

ASHDALE.

Not mine—for noble knighthood is too holy
For varlet weapons !—not your son's—

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son's !

ASHDALE.

Look to it, mother !—We may meet again, sir.
Fie, mother ! pale ?—Beshrew me, but those eyes
Look fondly on the knave !

[*Exit.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

O, sharper than
The serpent's tooth !—

NORMAN.

Sweet hostess, do not fear me ;
There is a something in your looks that melts
The manhood in me back to second childhood.
Let him rail on—he is your son, and safe
From the poor stranger's sword.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Go, Violet,—
No, stay—come back—I know thy secret, girl—
Thou lovest this Norman ?

VIOLET.

Lady—I—he saved
My life and honour—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Joy!—oh, joy! retire
And trust in me—

[*Exit* VIOLET.]

LADY ARUNDEL.

Now, sir—(*aside*) Alas! alas!
How like to his dead father!

NORMAN.

Speak—command,
And learn how thou canst move me!

LADY ARUNDEL.

I'm a mother!
I live but for this boy—heart, life, and soul,
Are interweaved with his!

NORMAN.

How sweet to hear
How mothers love their sons!

LADY ARUNDEL.

He is proud and fiery,
Quick to affront, slow to forgive. Nay, more:
Ashdale hath set his heart where thine is placed;
The air both breathe seems blood-red to my eyes.
Fly with her!—fly, this night!

NORMAN.

Rapture! With Violet? **This night, with her?**

LADY ARUNDEL.

You consent ?

NORMAN.

My birth untrack'd—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, lose not for a doubt
Your certain bliss ;—and, heed me—I have wealth
To sharpen law, and power to ripen justice ;—
I will explore the mazes of this mystery—
I—I will track your parents !

NORMAN.

Blessed lady !

What have I done, that thou shouldst care for Norman ?
My parents !—find me one with eyes like thine,
And, were she lowliest of the hamlet born,
I would not change with monarchs.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Mighty Nature!

Why speak'st thou thus to him, yet dumb to me?
What is there in these haggard looks to charm thee,
Young stranger?

NORMAN.

Madam, when I gaze upon thee,
Methinks an angel's hand lifts up the veil
Of Time—the Great Magician ; and I see
A face like thine bent o'er my infant couch,
And—pardon me—it is a vain, wild thought—
I know it is—but on my faith, I think
My mother was like thee !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Like me ! ha, ha !
Most foolish thought. (*Aside*) I shall go mad with
terror
If here he linger longer. Well, your ship
Is nigh at hand ; you can embark to-night.

NORMAN.

So soon—so soon all mine !—In distant years,
Tho' *we* may meet no more—when thou, fair dame,
Hast lost ev'n memory of the stranger—o'er
The lonely deep, morning and night, shall rise
His prayer for thee.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Thou, thou !—a prayer for me ?
Will Heaven record it ? Nature rushes on me—
I cannot—I—forgive me ; ere you part
We meet again, and—

[*Rushes out.*]

NORMAN.

When I spoke of prayer
Her lip grew white. What is there in this woman
That half divides my thoughts with Violet's love?
Strange, while I muse, a chill and solemn awe
Creeps to my heart. Away, ye ill-timed omens!
Violet, at thy dear name the phantoms vanish,
And the glad Future breaks, a Fairy Isle,—
Thy voice its music, and thy smile its heaven!

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

S C E N E I.

*The Gardens of the Castle—a different part from
that in Act I.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Who would have thought the proud Countess would have been so pleased with the love of this wild Captain for my young lady? I think he must have given her some of the golden ointment too! But anything to thwart the suit of the young Lord. She expects him to marry no one less than a princess I suppose.

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

Ugh! ugh! Have you seen Lord Ashdale pass this way?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

No, your Worship!

SIR MAURICE (*caressingly*).

So this sea-Captain is making love to your pretty charge, Mistress Prudence! I suppose, between you and me, there will be a marriage in the family.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

I am sure, Sir Maurice, I shall not say you nay.

SIR MAURICE.

Say me nay? I never offered thee anything.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

I thought you said "between you and me there was to be a marriage in the family." We might do a sillier thing, Sir Maurice. Better marry than do worse.

SIR MAURICE.

Worse!—Go and do your worst. I defy your seductions, you antiquated Dalilah. Hence; and if you chance on Lord Ashdale, say I would see him.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

If you should be serious, Sir Maurice, in your proposal—

SIR MAURICE.

Pish!—am I to be *your* jibe too?—[*Exit Mrs. PRUDENCE, laughing.*] Every new slight I receive in this household I treasure up *here—here!*

Enter GAUSSEN.

Ha—so soon returned! hast thou seen the priest?—hast thou got the proofs?—hast thou—

GAUSSEN.

The priest left his house this morning an hour ere I arrived, in company with a stranger, who, from what I could learn, is a seaman: but the description does not suit the one we look after.

SIR MAURICE.

I see the lands of Arundel dropping from my gripe—but, no—no! if I miss the proofs, I will secure the claimant. Giles Gaussen, this day five-and-twenty

years ago, didst thou not commit a crime that, if told, would bring thee to the scaffold ?—Go to !—unless this Norman die, the hemp is spun that will fit thee with a halter.

GAUSSEN.

I would I had the boy once more in my clutches. Think you I have forgiven him for this gash ? Till then, the wenches (curse them !) did not mock at me—and—no matter ! But what is he to the dead man ? Thou told'st me it was his parents who paid me the gold to rid them of him.

SIR MAURICE.

Why, hark, I will tell thee—hush ! what's that ?—get aside—it is he himself—quick !—

[*They hide amidst the trees.*]

Enter NORMAN and VIOLET.

VIOLET.

What, Norman, she consents ?

NORMAN.

Yes, tremble not,

My best beloved.

VIOLET.

I tremble lest hereafter

Thou deem'st me over bold.

NORMAN.

Not bold, but trustful

As love is ever !—Nay, be soothed, and think

Of the bright lands within the western main,
Where we will build our home, what time the seas
Weary thy gaze ;—there the broad palm-tree shades
The soft and delicate light of skies as fair
As those that slept on Eden ;—Nature, there,
Like a gay spendthrift in his flush of youth,
Flings her whole treasure in the lap of Time.—
On turfs by fairies trod, the eternal Flora
Spreads all her blooms ; and from a lake-like sea
Woos to her odorous haunts the western wind !
While, circling round and upward from the boughs,
Golden with fruits that lure the joyous birds,
Melody, like a happy soul released,
Hangs in the air, and from invisible plumes
Shakes sweetness down !—

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ye have fix'd the hour and place
For flight—this night ?

NORMAN.

Why, Lady, no ; as yet
The blush upon her cheek at *thought* of flight
Lingers like dawn in heaven,—but like the dawn
The blush foretells ~~the~~ smile the heaven shall wear !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Trifle not—Ashdale is no dull-eyed rival ;—
If he suspect—

NORMAN (*fiercely.*)

What then ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

So hot ! forget you
Your word to waive all contest ?—No—that glance
Does answer “ No.”—And now, fair sir—this letter
To the Venetian goldsmith, Paolo Trezzi,
Yields you this lady’s dower ; for from these halls
Never went bride without her portion.

NORMAN.

Lady,

Ye who have dwelt upon the sordid land,
Amidst the everlasting gloomy war
Of Poverty with Wealth—ye cannot know
How we, the wild sons of the Ocean, mock
At men who fret out life with care for gold.
O ! the fierce sickness of the soul—to see
Love bought and sold—and all the heaven-roof’d
temple
Of God’s great globe, the money-change of Mammon !
I dream of love, enduring faith, a heart
Mingled with mine—a deathless heritage
Which I can take unsullied to the stars,
When the Great Father calls his children home ;—
And in the midst of this Elysian dream,
Lo, Gold—the demon Gold !—alas ! the creeds
Of the false land !—

LADY ARUNDEL.

And once I thought like him !

Ah! happy Violet!—(*more coldly*) well—of this here—
after.

What hour can boat and boatmen wait your orders?

NORMAN.

The favouring moon breaks one hour ere the midnight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Meet where the Castle chase, by the last gate,
Slopes to the ocean-beach—

NORMAN.

Ay—as I took
That path this morn, I saw the scathed ruins
Of an old chapel on the spot you name ;—
Meet me there, Violet—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ha—within that chapel!

NORMAN.

Is it not holy ground?

LADY ARUNDEL (*impatiently*).

Well, well—begone,
And meet one hour ere midnight—

VIOLET.

Let us wait
And hope, dear Norman—

LADY ARUNDEL.

“ Hope,” girl ! he must quit
These halls this day—would you his blood ?—

VIOLET.

The love

I bear thee steals so little from the earth,
I cannot think it err because its faith
Will not nurse fear ;—to-night, then—but, alas !
See the sky lowers—the nights are dark—

NORMAN.

Nay, then,

Streams o’er our path the Planet Saint of lovers :
And mark this white plume with the sparkling gem,
Pluck’d from the turban of the Algerine
That happy day—so thou shalt see the token
Gleam thro’ the shadows.

VIOLET.

Yet—

NORMAN.

On board my bark

We boast a reverend priest—who shall attend
To consecrate our vows !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Come ! to your chamber

I’ll with thee and allay all fear ; hark ! steps !
Go, sir—let Ashdale find thee not !—remember
Thy word ; and so farewell and prosper.

NORMAN.

Ah!

Shall *we* not meet again?—God's blessing on thee!
Wilt *thou* not bless me too?

(*Kissing her hand.*)

LADY ASHDALE.

I!—Heaven will bless thee.

(*Pressing his hand convulsively.*)

[*Exeunt* LADY ASHDALE and VIOLET.]

NORMAN.

Now could I linger here whole hours ; and dream—
Of what?—well, Falkner has return'd ere this.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

A cavalier, arrived in haste, demands
An audience, sir.

NORMAN.

Of me?

SERVANT.

Upon the instant.

He bade me name him "Falkner."

NORMAN.

Falkner! Ever

Ready in need—admit him : sure true Friendship
Is a magician—and foretels our wishes.

Enter FALKNER.

Welcome, thrice welcome. Listen to me—bid
Our boat attend me on the beach below,

Close by a ruin'd chapel—where the sea
Washes the forest's farthest verge—one hour
Before night's last: our chaplain too is needed.
See to it—quick!—away!

FALKNER.

Piano, friend—

As the Italians phrase it—slow and sure.
I've famous news;—the priest I sought and found,
And left him near these halls. He has the proofs
(And will reveal them) of thy birth—thy name.
Well; art thou dumb?

NORMAN.

O Heavens! for this one day
Thou mak'st life bankrupt in its blessings!—He?
Onslow—art sure?—

FALKNER.

Some men may know their names,
Tho' *you* do not. He *told* me *his* was Onslow.

NORMAN.

Where shall I seek him?

FALKNER.

By the very chapel
Thou spok'st of!—

NORMAN.

Is this destiny?

FALKNER.

And wouldst thou
Have me still see thine orders—

NORMAN.

To the letter.
The boat—the chaplain—send to the ship and bid it
Veer round—in sight of the beach—before the hour.

FALKNER.

Explain—

NORMAN.

No time for words, dear Falkner—go !
[*Exit* FALKNER.]

Enter MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Sir Maurice !—Where's Sir Maurice ?—Have you seen
Sir Maurice here ?

NORMAN.

A fico for Sir Maurice !
Ah ! Mistress Prudence, when we meet again,
Poor Captain Norman may be Captain Crœsus !
Oh, Violet ! birth and wealth were sweet indeed,
If they could make me worthier to possess thee.

[*Exit.*[SIR MAURICE *comes forth.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE

Where have you hid yourself, sir ?

SIR MAURICE.

Hid myself!

Am I a man to hide myself?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

The Countess

Requires your presence on the instant; I

Said you were—Ah, she comes.

[*Exit.*]

SIR MAURICE (*to GAUSSEN, who is stealing out*).

Keep close—keep close!

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Dost thou not dread to look upon me?—What!

I gave thee gold—gold to thy heart's content—

To waft young Arthur to a distant land;—

Gold for his future lot—not bribes for murder!

Sold to the pirate!—cast on the wild seas!

O traitor!—traitor!

SIR MAURICE.

I knew nought of this.

Hush!—hush!—Speak low! He I employed the traitor,

Not your poor trusty knight;—but mark me, cousin;

Not then your danger half so dark as now.

Time flies the while I speak.—Thou scarce wert gone

When came a stranger with such news!—Old Onslow

At hand—he has the proofs!—I—I can save thee,

And I alone!—Who is the traitor now?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Terror on terror crowds upon me, like
Waters above a drowning wretch !

SIR MAURICE.

Be quick !

And, hark ! I must bribe high !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Get me the proofs,
Silence the priest, and whatsoe'er thou ask'st
Is thine.

SIR MAURICE.

The farms and manor-house of Bothleigh—

LADY ARUNDEL.

'Thine—thine !

SIR MAURICE.

Agreed !—now go in peace and safety—
Leave me to work.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, Percy ! for thy sake—
For thy sake this—not mine—bear witness, Heaven !
I will go pray.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, pray ! when weak bad women
Gorge some huge crime, they always after it
Nibble a bit of prayer, just to digest it !

So gluttons cram a hecatomb of meat,
And then correct it with a crumb of cheese.
Come from thy lair, my jackal of the sea.

[GAUSSEN *comes forth*.

Fly to the chapel. Ah, thou know'st those ruins!—
Swoop on the grey-hair'd man thou findest there :
Seize, and conceal, and gag him in some cave.
Tear from him all—papers and parchments—all !
Bring them to me—a thousand bright broad pieces.—
The seaman took the longer path ;—this way—
You see the track, it halves the distance.

GAUSSEN.

If

He struggle, must I—

SIR MAURICE.

Prate thou not of struggles ;
I give thee orders but to seize the papers.
Fail, and thou know'st I have thy secret !—Win,
And thou art rich for life—away !

[*Exit* GAUSSEN.

At worst

I am a thousand pounds a-year the warmer ;
At best—why, that's to come. I know a tame,
Patient, poor cousin—Gods, how I will plague him !

As he goes out enter LORD ASHDALE.

Hadst thou come sooner, thou hadst spoil'd a love-
scene.

ASHDALE.

Wert thou its witness, then ?

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, in the corner,
Like peeping Tom. You've been at Coventry?

ASHDALE.

Jest not—thou madden'st me.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou'lt swear to keep
Our counsel from thy mother?

ASHDALE.

By my honour.

SIR MAURICE.

They fly this night—they meet one hour ere midnight
By the old chapel. Boat and priest await—
She'll know him by the jewel in his plume:
Put one in thine—I'll sell thee one a bargain.

ASHDALE.

This night! the chapel! Oh, by earth and heaven,
I will not lose this girl! I thank thee, Knight.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Both flies are in the web! I know a spider
Who shall *eat* both. When shall I wake an earl?

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

*In the background a Gothic chapel partially in ruins ;
—through a broken arch the sea seen at a little distance. In front, broken forest-ground, a small brook running to the sea. At the side, a small tower that admits to the demesnes of the Castle.
Sunset.*

ONSLOW (*in front of the chapel*).

More than ten years have pass'd since I beheld him—
The noble boy ;—now time annuls my oath,
And cancels all his wrongs ! Ye dismal wrecks—
Well might the lightning scathe your bloodstain'd
walls,

To death and marriage consecrate alike,
As is the tale that trembles on my lips !
Lo, the toad battenning where the altar stood,
But ruin spares the tomb ! So thro' the earth
How many altars vow'd to human love
A single tomb outlasts !

Enter GAUSSEN from the tower.

GAUSSEN.

What, in time ?

Alone, too ?

[*Rushing upon ONSLOW.*

Speak not, stir not, or thou diest !
The scrolls—the papers that thou bear'st about thee !

ONSLOW.

Avaunt, I know thee, murderer ! On this spot
The dead rise up against thee.

GAUSSEN.

Dost thou know me?

Then know thy doom and doomsman!

ONSLOW.

Villain! off!

*[Breaks from him and passes through the arches of the chapel.]*GAUSSEN (*following*).

Thy blood on thine own head!

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

A human cry!

Ha! ruffian,—hold!

*[Rushes through the arches.]**Re-enter* GAUSSEN *disarmed.*

GAUSSEN.

Disarm'd! my hand is palsied!

[NORMAN appears as in pursuit—GAUSSEN, creeping along the ruins, enters the tower unperceived.]

NORMAN.

Is it a fiend, that earth should swallow?

ONSLOW (*within, groaning*).

Oh!

*[NORMAN re-enters the Chapel.]*GAUSSEN (*from the tower*).

We meet again!—

Enter NORMAN, *bearing* ONSLOW, *wounded.*

ONSLOW.

Ah ! life is fading fast !—
Let me look on thee—once more I behold thee,
And can depart in peace !—

NORMAN.

Hush—do not speak !—

ONSLOW.

Nay, words grow few. I bade thee meet me here ;
Yonder where Murder found me—on this day
Twenty and five years back—thy father—

NORMAN.

Father !

Say on ! my father ?

ONSLOW.

Died, most foully murder'd

NORMAN.

Blood—blood for blood—the murderer—name him !

ONSLOW.

Listen.—

There was a page, fair, gentle, brave, but lowborn ;—
The daughter of the lordly House he served
Saw him and loved :—they wed in stealth ;—these hands
Join'd them together in yon holy walls ;
They met in secret. I—I—my voice fails me !
[NORMAN goes to the brook, brings water in the hollow
of his hand, and sprinkles the face of the old man.]

ON SLOW.

The father learn'd the love—not wedlock—deem'd
His child dishonour'd.—On this spot the lovers
Met, with design to fly. I loved the youth—
His foster-sire—I was to share their flight.—

NORMAN.

Speak on—speak on.

ON SLOW.

'Twas night—a fearful night—
Lightning and storm!—They met—and murderous
hands
Seized on thy father—dragg'd him from her breast!—
Oh!—that wild shriek—I hear it still!—he died
By the same wretch that is my murderer now.

NORMAN.

Thy murderer now? O thanks, revealing Heaven!
One death, one deed—one arm avenges both!

ON SLOW.

Died in these arms—three flagstones from the altar—
Near the lone tomb where the first Baron sleeps;—
Still mark the gore-stains where his bones are buried.

NORMAN.

Oh!—horror—horror!

ON SLOW.

Three nights thence thy mother
Gave birth to thee;—a kinsman, whose cold heart
Promise of gold had soften'd to her grief,
Bore to my home the babe!

NORMAN.

And she, my mother ?
Does she live still ?—my mother ?

ONSLow.

She survived—
Forced to a lordlier husband's arms. The tale
Of the sad past unknown !

NORMAN.

It *was* her face
Mine infant eyes beheld ?—

ONSLow.

In stealth a wife ;
In stealth a mother—yes !—But with new ties
Came new affections.—To the second nuptials
A second son was born.—She loved him well ;
Better than thee—than her own soul.

NORMAN.

Poor mother !—

ONSLow.

But few words more.—I—I—Oh—

NORMAN.

Breathe less loud,
My soul is in my ears.

ONSLow.

Too moved by pity—
Too sway'd by fear—lest they should rend thee from me,

I took a solemn oath to veil the secret—
Conceal thy rights—while lived her sire, and he,
Her second lord ; and thus allow'd thy youth
To quit my roof :—they died,—the sire and husband,—
Some two years since ;—thou still afar. I sought
Thy mother, and her heart was marble ;—Oh !
Here—here (*gives papers*). Go, seek thy shelter in
the law ;
But shun yon towers !—thy mother—

NORMAN.

But one word !

My mother's name !—

ONSLOW (*pointing to papers*).

There !

[*Raises himself to his feet with a sudden effort.*

Hear my last words, Heaven !

Protect the wrong'd !—upon this head I lay
An old man's blessing—Now, farewell !

[*Dies.*

NORMAN.

Stay—stay

Thy flight, thou gentlest spirit ! Dumb ! He breathes
not !

Dead—dead—my second sire ! O hell-born deed !
Could not these white hairs plead for thee ?

—Revenge !

Earth give no shelter to the man of blood !
Conduct his feet, Ordainer of all doom,
To retributive slaughter ; and vouchsafe

This arm thine instrument ! Mine eyes deceived me,
Or the red beam, streaking the vaulted gloom,
Show'd me the face of——Well ! the Heavens are just,
AND WE SHALL MEET AGAIN !—Farewell, farewell !
Heaven gains a saint in thee !—My mother lives !
What tho' she has another child to love ?
Is not a mother's heart a mighty space,
Embracing all her children ? Of that realm
How little will content me !—She will fold
Her arms around me, and from out her breast
The eyes that look to hers shall melt away
With passionate tears the past and all its sorrows !

[Opening the papers.]

What—what ! her son—her son ! Mysterious Nature,
At the first glance I loved her ! Wealth, lands, titles,
A name that glitters, like a star, amidst
The galaxy of England's loftiest born !
O Violet—O my bride—and O my mother !
Out from my heart henceforth each low desire,
Each meaner hope my wilder youth conceived !
Be my soul instinct with such glorious thoughts
As, springing to great deeds, shall leave my land
A bright heroic lesson of the things
In which true nobleness endures for ever !
And while I told my woes she wept, she did !
'Tis her sweet writing ! bless her ! See, she calls me
Arthur, and child, and child, her precious one,
Her hope, her darling ! Mother—my own mother !

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The hall in the Castle of Arundel.—Night—lights.

SIR MAURICE—GAUSSEN.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou hast not got the papers; and thou hast committed a murder; and, what is worse, thou hast slain the wrong man!

GAUSSEN.

But——

SIR MAURICE.

But me no buts: thou hast ruined me. Stand back, and let me think. (*Aside.*) The heir has the proofs—clear! He will not come back to this house, the very den of his unnatural foe—clear! He will seek the law for redress—clear, clear! But he loves Violet. He will keep his assignation; carry away the girl; and then off to London, to assert his rights:—all this is clear as noon-day! Gausсен, thou canst repair all. The sea-captain will be at the ruins to-night—eleven of the clock—to be married in the chapel by stealth.

GAUSSEN.

I overheard all that in the gardens (*aside*—and more too perhaps), and am already prepared. My bold fellows shall seize priest and boatmen, and I will await the bridegroom.

SIR MAURICE.

And that thy cutlass may not fail thee this time, I will brace thy hand by refreshing thy memory. Five-and-twenty years ago—thou then but a young fellow, caught in thy first desperate piracy on the high seas—wert placed in the dungeons of this castle, in order to be marched off the next day to the county gaol, with a rope for thy journey's end. Thou wert released that night: at day-break thou wert on the merry waves again, with a sack of pistoles in thy pouch. What was the price of thy life and liberty?

GAUSSEN.

The blood of a man whom the stern old Lord bade me strike as his worst foe.

SIR MAURICE.

Right! and the son of that man is the boy thou didst cast on the seas! Thou sayest that Onslow recognised thee. Be sure the dying man told the son in what face to look for his father's murderer. If thou make not sure work to-night, thou art meat for the crows!

GAUSSEN.

Trust me. I will fasten to him as a panther on the stag!

SIR MAURICE.

And—stand back!—let me think!—let me think! I see it!—I see! Thou shalt not only do the deed, but thou shalt find another to bear the blame! This crack-brain, Ashdale, the young Lord, will be on the spot. He

loves the girl Norman would wed : they will have words, perhaps blows. Be on the watch with thy fellows—ten, twenty of them : rush in, under pretence of separating—stab—stab both ! Dead men tell no tales : and ye and your men can bear witness that they fell by each other's hands !

GAUSSEN.

'Tis a death more than I bargained for. The price ?

SIR MAURICE.

Shall be doubled—two thousand pieces !

GAUSSEN.

Touch hands. Bring five hundred to-night—by the old chapel—for my men. I will come for the rest to thine own house to-morrow eve at dusk.

SIR MAURICE.

Five hundred to-night ! Five hundred, Bully Gausсен, beforehand ! Premiums are an abomination in law—usury, rank usury !

GAUSSEN.

I must have them : my men want pay, and are half mutinous as it is. Blood and wounds, old knight ! this is sharp work you set them at—to net a covey of sailors, who will fight like devils, and to stab a lord—to say nothing of the other man—that's my quarrel—five hundred pieces, or I hoist sail, and you may catch the sailors and stab the Lord for yourself.

SIR MAURICE (*groaning*).

Five hundred little, pretty, smiling, golden-faced

cherubim: 'tis a second Massacre of the Innocents! Well, thou shalt have them (*aside*—and the Countess must repay me). Before eleven I will be with thee: but you will smite both—both the Lord and the Captain: no time for death-bed explanations.

GAUSSEN.

They shall never hear the bell toll midnight!

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Then, ere matins; I shall be Baron Ashdale and heir of Arundel. The lordship and lands of Ashdale are so settled that they go at once to the male heir. Yes, I can trust this man to do the deed! but can I trust him after it? A pretty acquaintance Giles Gausсен for a great lord!—Well, time enough to be rid of him.

ASHDALE (*speaking without*).

Yes—the dun and sorrell.

Enter LORD ASHDALE.

SIR MAURICE.

Hast thou prepared thy plans, my Hotspur?—

ASHDALE.

Yes;

My steeds and grooms will wait me in the forest:
And, for the rest,—I wear my father's sword.

SIR MAURICE.

Oh, I could hug thee! By my golden spurs,
I doat on valour!—Thou wilt win the maid,

I know thou wilt.—Faith, how a frown becomes thee !
Yet he's no carpet warrior—thou must use
All thy address !—

ASHDALE.

Thou need'st not urge me to it.

SIR MAURICE.

Good night, and luck to thee. (*Aside.*) Now, now I
have him !

I feel myself a lord already !—lights there !

Enter Servant.

Light me, good knave ; there is a pistole for thee.

(*Aside*) A great man should be generous.—'Bye, my
Hector (*hums a tune*).

Is my state-coach below ?—Oh, I forgot. [*Exit.*

LORD ASHDALE (*looking after him in great surprise*).

Touch'd, crazed !—the old knight has so starved his
body,

The brains have taken fright, and given him warning.

Ha, ha ! adventure is the gale to love ;

And stratagem the salt of its tide ! ha, ha !

I think I never loved this maid so well

As now, 'twixt fear of loss and hope of triumph.

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy—

ASHDALE.

Well, madam, I am press'd—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, Percy!

Speak kindly, Percy!

ASHDALE.

Mother, if my mood
Be chafed to-day, forgive it!—shall I speak?
Your sudden care for this ignoble stranger,
Coupled with memory of wild words your lips
Oftimes let fall—your penances and fasts—
Your midnight vigils—your habitual gloom;—
Weaving all this, to form a likelihood,
Why, harsher judgment than your son's, my mother,
Might half suspect—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Speak on, sir—

ASHDALE.

That your past
Was darken'd by some unatoned-for sin,
Whose veil this stranger's hand had lifted.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy,
Your words are daggers—if the unstrung brain
At times gives discord—if the insane phantoms
That haunt all hearts vex'd by the storms of life—
(And *I* have suffer'd, Percy, sadly suffer'd)—
Do mock and gibber in my dreary path—
'Tis thine to pity, to forbear, to soothe,
Never to doubt. Where should that angel men

Call "CHARITY" abide—but in the hearts
Of our own children ?

ASHDALE.

Mother—oh, forgive me !

If the unquiet, cavilling spirit born
Within me, of the race that, like the ermine,
Would pine to death when sullied by one stain,
Makes me seem harsh—forgive me !

LADY ARUNDEL (*approaching him*).

Never know

Till I am dead how deeply I have loved thee !

Thy father—tho' an earl in rank—and near
To the royal house in blood and martial fame—
Had wed before—had other sons—on *me*
Alone depends thy heritage—from me
Thy lordship and thy fortunes.

ASHDALE.

True, what then ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

You have loved pomp and state ; and I have pinch'd
To feed the lavish wants of your wild youth—
Have I not, Percy ?

ASHDALE.

You have been to me
Ever most bounteous, mother.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Yet, in truth,
You prize too much the outward show of things.

Could you not bear—for you have youth and health,
Beauty and strength—the golden wealth of Nature :—
Could you not bear descent from that vain height
Of fortune, where poor Vanity builds towers
The heart inhabits not—to live less proud—
To feast less gorgeously—to curb thy wants
Within the state—not of the heir to earls,
But of a simple gentleman, whose station
Lies in his worth and valour ?—Could you ?

ASHDALE.

Never !

Such as I am, my sire and you have made me,—
Ambitious, haughty, prodigal !—my hopes
A part of my very life ! If I could fall
From my high state, it were as Romans fell—
On their sword's point. Why is your cheek so hueless ?
Why daunt yourself with air-drawn phantasies ?
Who can deprive me of mine heritage ?
The titles of the antique seignory—
That will be mine, in trust for sons unborn,
When time (from this day may the date be far !)
Transfers the ancestral coronal that gems
Thy stately brows to no unworthy heir ?

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

My proud soul speaks in his, my lion boy !
Come shame—come crime—come death and doom
hereafter—
I'll know no son but him !

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Most honour'd madam,
The cavalier you entertained this morning
Is here.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I will not see him !

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

Gracious lady !
My business—grant me but your private ear—
Will plead for my intrusion.

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

All else fails !
My own stern heart support me !

NORMAN (*aside*).

How like strangers
They look upon me, both, the while I yearn
To rush into their arms !

ASHDALE.

Why parley with him ?
Who is he ?—What ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Hush !—I attend you, sir ;
Be seated—Ashdale, leave us.

[NORMAN *places his cloak and hat on a table*
and draws a seat near to LADY ARUNDEL.]

ASHDALE (*carelessly*).

By my troth,
I have no wish to mar good company.
Fair sir, I owe you back disdainful words
Repaid you later.

NORMAN (*aside*).

I love that warm spirit !—
’Twas mine at *his* age—my dear brother !

ASHDALE (*going to the table and exchanging the
cloak and hat*).

Ho !

The signal plume—a fair exchange,—so please you,
The cloak too. Tarry now as long as lists you ;
I’ll be your likeness elsewhere.

[*Exit.*

• NORMAN.

How to break it—
And not to give overwrought joy the shock
Of grief—

LADY ARUNDEL.

I listen, sir.

NORMAN (*with great emotion*).

You love your son ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Better than life, I love him !

NORMAN.

Have you not
Another son—a first-born ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Sir !

NORMAN.

A son
On whom those eyes dwelt first, whose infant cry
Struck first on that divine and holy chord,
In the deep heart of woman, which awakes
All nature's tenderest music ? Turn not from me.
I know the secret of thy mournful life.
Will it displease thee—will it—to believe
That son is living still ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

How, sir—such licence ?
I will not brook it !

[Rises to go.]

NORMAN.

No, thou wilt not leave me !
I say, thou wilt not leave me ! On my knees,
I say thou *shalt* not leave me !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Loose thine hold,
Or I will call my menials, to chastise
This most unmanner'd freedom ! •

NORMAN.

Mother, mother!

I am thy son—thine Arthur—thine own child!

Do you deny your own?

LADY ARUNDEL.

I have no son,

Save Percy Ashdale!

NORMAN.

Do not—do not hear her,

Thou everlasting and all-righteous Judge!

Thou, who, amidst the seraph hosts of heaven,

Dost take no holier name than that of “Father!”

Hush, hush! Behold these proofs—the deed of marriage!

The attesting oaths of them who witness’d, and

Of him who sanctified, thy nuptial vow!

Behold these letters!—see, the words are still

By years unfaded!—to my sire, your lover!

Read how you loved him then. By all that love—

Yea, by himself, the wrong’d and murder’d one,

Who hears thee now above—by these, my mother,

Do not reject thy son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

The worst is past.

(Re-seats herself.)

And were this so—own that I had a son—

What proof that you are he?

NORMAN.

What proof? There, there!

In your own heart,—your eyes—that dare not face me;

Your trembling limbs—there—there my witness! Nature
Blanches your cheek, and heaves your struggling breast!
Thou know'st I am thy son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, while he speaks,
My courage melts away! And yet, my Percy,
My son, whose years blossom'd beneath my eyes—
All *his* hopes blasted! No, no!

NORMAN.

See—you falter!

Ah——

LADY ARUNDEL.

Sir, if you, a stranger till this day,
Have, by suborning most unworthy spies,
Glean'd from the tragic tale of my gone life
Some hints to build this wild and monstrous fable,
Go, seek the laws to weave them into shape
More cunning and less airy. Quit my presence!

NORMAN.

I will not!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Will not? Ho, there!

NORMAN.

Call your hirelings;
And let them hear me!

[*Goes to the hearth.*

In these halls—upon
The sacred hearth-stone of my sires—beneath

Their knightly scutcheon—and before their forms,
Which, from the ghostly canvass, I invoke
To hail their son—I take my stand! I claim
My rights! They come—your menials! bid them thrust
From his own hearth the heir of Arundel!

Enter Servants.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Seize on!—No! no!—My father's lordly mien
Is his! *I dare not!*

FIRST SERVANT.

Did you summon us,
My gracious lady?

NORMAN.

Yes! she summon'd! Now,
Lady of Arundel, your mandates!

LADY ARUNDEL (*sinking into a seat*).

Leave us;

We do not need you now!

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

LADY ARUNDEL (*rising, and hastily approaching*).

Oh, Arthur!—son!—
If so you be—have mercy!

NORMAN.

Do not kneel—
No, do not kneel—that, *my* place!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Listen to me.

Grant that you are my son—the unhappy pledge
Of a most mournful nuptials :—grant that I,
Scarce on the verge when child-born fancy glides
Into the dreaming youth, misplaced my heart—
Forgot the duties which the noble owe
The past and future :—that a deed was done
Which, told, would blacken with a murderer's crime
My father's memory—stain *thy* mother's name—
Bid the hot blush, rank in the vulgar eye,
Blister my cheek, and gnaw into my heart :—
Grant this—and you, my son ! will you return
The life I gave, for that, more vile than death,
The everlasting shame ? NOW, SPEAK !

NORMAN.

Go on !

Go on ! I cannot speak !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Heaven witness for me,

With what reluctant and remorseful soul,
After what threats endured and horrors done,
I yielded to my ruthless father's will,
And with false lips profaned a second vow !
I had a child ! I was a mother ! true :
But did I dare to dwell upon that thought ?
In darkness and in secret—if I sought
The couch it hallow'd—did not my steps creep
Fearful and shuddering as the tread of crime,

Which starts at its own shadow ? With that son
Were woven, not the proud, self-glorying joys
Which mothers know ; but memory, shame, the dread
And agony of those who live between
Evil and its detection. Yet I loved thee—
I loved thee once !

NORMAN.

I knew it—Heaven, I knew it !

LADY ARUNDEL.

I loved thee till another son was born—
One who, amidst the sad and desolate world,
Seem'd sent from Heaven by Mercy. Think, thou wert
Alien—afar—seen rarely—on strange love
Leaning for life ;—but this thrice-precious one
Smiled to my eyes—drew being from my breast—
Slept in my arms ;—the very tears I shed
Above my treasure were to men and angels
Alike such holy sweetness !—food, health, life,
It clung to me for all !—mother and child,
Each was the all to each !

NORMAN.

I am not jealous—
I weep with thee, my mother—see, I weep !
Oh, so much love, and has it nought to spare ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

My boy grew up—my Percy. Looking on him,
Men prized his mother more. So fair and stately,

And the world deem'd to such bright hopes the heir.
I did not love thee *then*—for, like a cloud,
Thy dark thought hung between him and the future.
And so—

NORMAN.

Thou didst not—O the unnatural horror!—
Thou didst not—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Doom thee to the pirate?—No,
No—not so ruthless, Arthur. But design'd
To rear thee up in ignorance of thy rights—
A crime—'tis punish'd. So, my tale is done.
Reclaim thy rights—on me and on my son
Avenge thy father's wrongs and thine;—I ask not
Mercy from thee—and from the hated earth
I pass for ever to the tomb, which hath
Even for shame a shelter!

NORMAN.

Oh, my mother!
You do not know the heart your words have pierced!
I—I—thy son—thine Arthur—I avenge?
Never on thee. Live happy—love my brother—
Forget that I was born. Here, here—these proofs—
These—these (*giving the papers*). Oh, see you where
the words are blister'd
With my hot tears? I wept—it was for joy:
I did not think of lands, of name, of birthright—
I did but think these arms should clasp a mother!
Now they are worthless—take them—you can deem no

How in my orphan youth my lonely heart
Pined for the love you will not give me!—Mother,
Put but thine arms around me—let me feel
Thy kisses on my brow;—but once—but once!
Let me remember in the years to come
That I have lived to say “A mother bless’d me!”

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, could I speak—could I embrace him—all
My heart would gush forth in one passionate burst,
And I should bid him stay; and—Percy, Percy,
My love for thee has made me less than human!

NORMAN.

She turns away—she will not bless the outcast!
She trembles with a fear that I should shame her!
Farewell—farewell for ever! Peace be with thee—
Heaven soothe thy griefs, and make the happy son
Thou lovest so well the source of every solace.
For me (since it will please thee so to deem),
Think I am in my grave!—for never more,
Save in thy dreams, shalt thou behold me!—Mother,
For the last time I call thee so!—I—I
Cannot speak more—I—

[Rushes from the room.]

LADY ARUNDEL.

Arthur! O, my son!
Come back, come back, my son!—my blessed son!

[Falls by the threshold.]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Hall in the Castle of Arundel, as in the last Scene.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Gone—gone!—and here he stood, and bless'd the mother
Who did not bless her son!—Ah, Heaven forgive me!
These are the deeds in which I placed my safety,
Now won and worthless!—Oh, how human hearts
Do feed on fire, till, when the flame is slaked
Ashes alone are left!

Enter SIR MAURICE.—(Lady Arundel conceals the papers.)

SIR MAURICE.

Well, cousin, fear not:
All is arranged.—Ere cockcrow thou shalt be
Free of thy terrors!—old Sir Maurice still
Is good for something, eh?

LADY ARUNDEL.

What guilty thought
Speaks in thy ominous smile?

SIR MAURICE.

If thus you wrong me
I'm mute;—and yet thou know'st I live to serve thee.

I can secure thee all—glad days—calm nights :
But in this world there are such covetous knaves,
That, la you now,—I am ashamed to tell thee—
The rogue I have hired wants two thousand pieces
This very night to—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Silence !—I abhor
Thy crooked counsels—thy rapacious guile :—
I've been too long benighted, and pursued
Meteors for guides ! Now the cloud rolls away,
And on my terror breaks the morning star.
I'll nought of thee !

SIR MAURICE.

Thou wilt not !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Miser, no !
Thy black and hideous guilt, out-darkening mine,
Had well nigh drowned my soul beneath a sea
Deeper than that to which thy trait'rous craft
Consign'd my first-born ! Quit these halls for ever,
And starve beside the chests whose every coin
At the Last Day shall in the Court of Heaven
Witness against thee, Judas !

SIR MAURICE.

Miser ! Judas !
I thank thee—no, to-morrow I will thank thee.
This crowns the cup of insult ! You and yours,
Your dull-soul'd father, and your lowborn lover—

Your coxcomb son—your veriest varlet, down
To the gross scullion, fattening on your offal—
All—all have broke their idiot jests on me—
Me, but for you, the Lord of Arundel!
Yet all, at need, could fawn on old Sir Maurice—
Eke from his wits their poverty of brain—
And——plague upon this wrath!—thou art not worth it
I leave these halls. When next we meet, proud dame,
Thy crest may be less lofty! Miser! Judas!

[*Exit.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

There's meaning in this frontless insolence :
“ When next we meet,” said he ; “ When next we
meet !”

Broods he some new and deadlier mischief?—Ha !
Time wanes—Within there !—

Enter Servant.

What's the hour ?

SERVANT.

The chime

Just told the quarter, Madam !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ah ! so late ?

Where is my son, Lord Ashdale ?

SERVANT.

Left the castle

Some minutes since : his grooms and steeds preceded.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Whither?—

SERVANT.

I know not, madam, but he bade me
Say, that he might return not ere the morning.

LADY ARUNDEL.

The morning!—now the danger glares upon me.
He has whisper'd Percy of the lovers' flight;
And they will meet—the brothers—meet as foes!
Quick—torches—quick—let every menial arm!
Quick—follow—lights here!—Heaven avert this woe—
Forgive the mother—Save, oh, save the sons!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*The exterior of a ruined Chapel—the Tower of the
Chapel, with large Gothic doors, for the background.*

Night—the stage darkened.

GAUSSEN and Two Pirates.

GAUSSEN.

All our men posted?—

1ST PIRATE.

Ay, my Captain;—Luke,

With ten stout fellows, hid beneath the rock,
Will seize the boatmen when they run ashore.

GAUSSEN.

Good.

Enter LUKE.

LUKE.

We have nabb'd the rogues—four sailors and
A jolly chaplain—only one, their leader,
Cut his way through, and fled !

GAUSSEN.

A murrain on him !
It matters not—all done ere he can peach !

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

That woman's taunts put me beside my temper ;
But I am on the threshold of my greatness.
Sir Maurice Beevor shall be merged to-morrow
Into Lord Ashdale ;—like a drop of water
Into a glass of aqua vitæ.

GAUSSEN.

Well, Knight !
You have the monies ?

SIR MAURICE (*giving a bag*).

Little dears ! you see them
Tuck'd up in bed and fast asleep—my heart aches

That such a happy and united family
Should be dispersed upon the world, and never
Come home again !—Poor things !—Now, prithee man,
Don't be so rough with them !—

GAUSSEN.

Since last we met
My scouts inform me that the dogs of law
Are on my track.—'Twere best when all is done
To put to sea.

SIR MAURICE.

Right, right.

GAUSSEN.

So bring the rest
Of the gold to-night ;—one half-hour hence I reckon
My part o' the compact will be sign'd and seal'd.

SIR MAURICE.

So soon ?—'Gad how impatient, fierce, and fiery
My monies make him ! Well, it shall be so ;
I'll bring the rest—

GAUSSEN.

Stay ; when I've slain this Norman,
The papers on him—

SIR MAURICE.

Thou wilt give to me—
'Tis in the bargain.

GAUSSEN.

What, Knight, if I took them
To the great Countess, yonder ?—

SIR MAURICE.

To the countess,
Villain!—I would—I would—(How black he looks!
I'd best be civil)—I would think it, Giles,
Not quite the conduct that becomes an honest,
Kind-hearted friend, like you.—

GAUSSEN.

(*Aside*) As I suspected :
The Dame of Arundel's concerned in this.
I'll see what's in these papers ere I give them
To the old hunks. (*Aloud*) You may depend upon
me—
Bring but the gold in time. Good night.

SIR MAURICE.

I' faith,
The pleasantest thing the rogue has said.—Good night!
Look sharp! remember both must be despatch'd.
A thousand each!—What shall I be to-morrow?
[*Exit.*

GAUSSEN.

Both!—baugh! what feud have I with the young Lord,
That he should die to please thee?—*Each* a thousand!
Why, when thou bring'st two thousand to my lair,
Think'st thou one thousand shall go back again?
The Lord shall live:—but for the other—he
Who set this mark upon my brow—the son
Of the dead man—one blow wipes off old scores,
And saves new debts. None but myself must know
What worth there may be in those papers!—Yet

The lad is cunning with his weapon.—Well,
He shall not draw it!—So,—an ambush!—Luke,
Lend me thy cutlass,—I lost mine to-day,
And will not trust to my knife alone—the lanthorn!—
Watch for the gallant with the sparkling plume
And snow-white cloak, a damsel on his arm;—
Tell him the priest awaits him in the chapel,
His boatmen in the creek below—and vanish,
That message said. Keep i' the dark, nor let him
Note a strange face—thy hat and cloak good mufflers

LUKE.

I'm an old hand—ne'er fear!

GAUSSEN.

And if another,
Of gayer dress, the young Lord, come this way,
Do *him* no harm—but seize; his life will be
Well worth the ransoming. Now for this scar
Will I have vengeance—where the father fell
Shall the son bleed.

[Exit within the chapel.]

LUKE.

Old Mother Moon is lazy,
Still in her nightcap!—Dark and hush'd; but men
Who live 'twixt knife and halter have sharp senses—
The owl's eye and the hare's ear. Hist!—what's that.
A hinge creaks yonder—ah! a footfall!

Enter LORD ASHDALE (in NORMAN'S hat and cloak)
and VIOLET.

VIOLET.

Speak !

The silence and the darkness chill me.

ASHDALE.

Dearest,

No cause for fear !

VIOLET.

Thy voice sounds sharp and strange.

Ah, my heart fails me !

ASHDALE (*aside*).

Yet, I'd swear her Norman
Would have said just what I did.

LUKE.

In the chapel

The priest awaits—your boatmen in the creek
Behind yon rock.

ASHDALE.

Aha ! the priest—stay, fellow,—
The priest—the chapel ?—marriage, eh ?

LUKE.

What else, sir ?

ASHDALE.

What light in the chapel ?

LUKE.

Only a dark lanthorn.

[*Exit.*

ASHDALE.

All favours—this is luckier than I hoped for !
I see !—the marriage first—then flight ! Decorous !
Sweet one, within !—hush !—come !

VIOLET.

Mine ear does mock me ;
But terror plays sad tricks with the senses ! Norman,
My frame may tremble, but my heart is brave—
For *that* can never doubt thee.

[*Exeunt ASHDALE and VIOLET through the
doors of the chapel.*

Enter FALKNER (his sword drawn).

FALKNER (*in a whisper*).

Norman !—Captain !
I dare not call aloud.—None here ?—these rascals—
Have they laid hands on Norman, too ? Who comes ?

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

I see her not. What, Violet ?

FALKNER.

Art thou Norman ?

NORMAN.

Falkner !

FALKNER.

Some villany is in the wind !
Scarce landed, when a rude band swept upon us ;
Thy boatmen seized—the priest too ;—I alone,
With my good sword, open'd a path for flight,
And, hurrying to thee with the news—
[*A shriek within the chapel.*

NORMAN.

That voice !—
[*Exit NORMAN within the chapel.*

FALKNER.

More sport !—egad, I feel at home to-night !
[*Exit FALKNER after NORMAN.*

Enter LUKE.

LUKE.

Who spoke ?—Avast there !—Sure I heard—

*Enter LADY ARUNDEL and Servants, bearing torches
from the cave.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

Look round !
They must be here—Violet has left the castle.
It is the hour !—Who skulks there ?—seize him !
[*Servants seize LUKE.*

Enter VIOLET from the chapel, and falls at LADY ARUNDEL'S feet.

VIOLET.

Save me !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Girl, girl—what means this ?—where is HE—my—Norman ?

VIOLET.

Stir not—the spot is desecrate. Methinks
Witchcraft and Murder reign there !—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ha !—I dare not
Set foot beyond that threshold.

VIOLET.

By mine honour—
Tho' thou wilt mock me—I do think to have seen
Two Normans by the altar !—

LADY ARUNDEL.

His dead father
Has left his grave !

VIOLET.

We crept through the dim aisles :
Sudden, a light—a form—a gleaming knife—
I shriek'd, and clung upon the murderous arm—
When, lo !—a second Norman :—on the floor
This lay—and there—avenging, stern, unearthly—
The other rose, gigantic, thro' the darkness !

FIRST SERVANT.

Help to our lady !—

LADY ARUNDEL (*waving him back*).

Sirs, I need ye not.

Fall back !—what more ?

VIOLET.

I know no more—I fled,
Darkling and blind with supernatural horror,
Along the dismal aisles.—

(*After a pause.*)

Oh ! mad—mad wretch !
Why rave I thus ?—danger and murder near him !
In—in !—your lights—your swords !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Open the tomb,
And I will front the Dead One !
[*The chapel doors are thrown open—the torch-
bearers enter—NORMAN discovered near an old
Gothic tomb, his sword drawn, standing before
the body of GAUSSEN.*

It is the spot
On which the bridegroom fell before my eyes—
And now he stands as if in life !

VIOLET.

O Norman !—
You live—you live !

H

NORMAN.

Lo, where the father bled
The son has slain the slaughterer !—

LORD ASHDALE *and* FALKNER *advance*.

ASHDALE.

Thou !—my mother !
Where is the saviour of my life ?—The stranger ?

NORMAN (*coming in front of the stage*).
Embrace thy son—hear him ! *I saved his life !*

ASHDALE.

Yes, when the knife was at my throat, his hand
Palsied the caitiff blow. I had well nigh fallen
Into the pit myself had dug. Thy plume
Deceived the blade design'd for thee. Nay, mother,
I am unscathed.

LADY ARUNDEL.

He saved thee—He !
[*The Servants remove the body.*

LUKE.

Your Worships,
If we have sinn'd, it was Sir Maurice Beevor
Whose monies bribed our chief.—The Knight desired
The blood of both—your Lordship and the stranger.

LORD ASHDALE.

Can this be true ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

I can believe it. Now
His dark designs are clear !

FALKNER (*to* LUKE).

Our honest messmates—
‘Thou black-brow’d cutthroat—speak, where are they ?—
speak !
If a hair on their heads be hurt—

LUKE.

Our leader dead,
Our business done—your men are safe !

FALKNER.

Lead on, then ;
Advance the torches—follow.

NORMAN.

All the menials—
‘Take all—(*aside*) no hireling witness to the conference,
‘The last on earth, between the son and mother !
[*The Servants place torches on the crags of the
forest-ground, and exeunt with FALKNER and
LUKE.*

Manent LADY ARUNDEL—LORD ASHDALE—NOR-
MAN—VIOLET.

LADY ARUNDEL (*advancing towards the chapel*).
‘There rests what once was love, now dust ! Perchance

The love still lives in heaven—and penitent prayer
The charm that spells the angels.

*[Enters and kneels by the old tomb.—The moon
breaks forth.]*

NORMAN.

Violet!

Wert thou deceived, too?

VIOLET.

Shame upon thee, cousin!

ASHDALE.

Fair stranger, stratagem in love all fair :—
Forgive my this day's frowardness—your hand—
'Tis well—you have saved my life; do more—resign
With a good grace this lady—she is highborn,
Of our own house;—too young to know her heart.
Your worth might make you noble;—but as yet
You have your spurs to win. Resign the maid,
But take the dower thrice told.

NORMAN.

Name, fortune, lands,
A mother's love—and now the only heart
That clings to mine—all! he takes all!—the ewe-lamb!

ASHDALE.

Thy silence gives consent. Oh, Violet, hear me!
I have too far presumed on my high fortunes—
Woo'd thee too rashly. Pardon me. renounce
This stranger—brave, but of no fitting birth—

And stand amidst the noblest dames in England,
The first in state as beauty!

VIOLET.

Norman, Norman!

Why art thou mute?—why dost thou gaze upon me?—
Why rest thy arms gather'd above thy breast,
As if to ward me thence?

NORMAN.

Go, look upon him!

His form more fair than mine, his hopes more high.
I have lost faith in human love! When mothers
Forsake their sons, why not the maid her lover?

VIOLET.

Methinks you mock me. Hear me, thou, Lord Ash-
dale.

You ask my hand—you proffer wealth, pomp, power,
And he but toil and danger!

NORMAN.

Thou hast said it.

VIOLET.

Behold my choice! There, where he stands, my fate is!
Take me, Oh, take me, Norman! Woman's love,
Once given, may break the heart that holds—but never
Melts into air, save with her latest sigh.

NORMAN.

Faithful amidst the faithless! Hope again



Blooms through the desert. Hither, and let me hear
The music of one heart that answers mine !

ASHDALE.

It shall not be ! Ignoble one ! The life
Thou sav'dst is nothing without her !—the boon
Is cancell'd. To thy weapon—foot to foot—
Let valour win the prize !

NORMAN.

I will not harm thee.

ASHDALE.

Insolent boaster ! “*Harm !*”—what ! neither yield
Nor yet defend ? What would'st thou ?

NORMAN.

What ? why, stab me
Here, in these arms, and I'll forgive thee ! Do it ;
And tell thy mother, when thy holiday blade
Was raised to smite, my warrior sword fell—thus !

ASHDALE.

Saints, give me patience !

LADY ARUNDEL (*advancing from the chapel*).

Ay, upon the stone
Where his bones sleep I have pray'd ; and I have gain'd
The strength that is not of the world ! How, Percy ?
Thy sword drawn on thy——

NORMAN.

Hush ! I have kept thy secret !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Unhappy boy !

ASHDALE.

Why turn thine eyes from him
To me ? and straight again to him ?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Approach,
Percy, my son !—Lord Ashdale now no more—
Behold thy brother ! Ay, the conscience wrings
Out truth at last :—Thine elder, the sole heir
To this ill-fated house !

ASHDALE.

This is delirium !

LADY ARUNDEL.

It is not so, irreverent one ! Here, Arthur,
Into thy hands I do restore the proofs
That re-assert thy rights—my eldest born,
By long-conceal'd, but holiest wedlock with
Arthur Le Mesnil ! To his breast, my Percy !
There is none nobler !

NORMAN.

Wilt thou not, my brother ?
Whate'er is mine——

ASHDALE.

Is *thine*—And dost thou deem
That I will fawn, a beggar, on thy bounty?
Lackey thy heels, and crawl for crumbs that fall
From the rich, bounteous, elder brother's board?
Ha, ha! I'd rather couch with the wild boar,
And starve on acorns, than the world should cry,
"See once proud Ashdale, the meek younger brother!"

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy, my best-loved!

ASHDALE.

Mother, is it so?
Say that thou didst but sport upon my pride;
That thou wouldst try me! Speak!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Alas, alas!

It is the truth!

ASHDALE.

All is unravell'd now!
I ask no proofs—thy looks suffice for proof!
I will not hear a tale, perhaps of shame!
So, a long farewell, mother!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do not leave me!
Oh, do not leave me! Think how I have loved thee!
How, for thy sake, I sinn'd against my soul,

And veil'd, and barr'd, and would have crush'd his rights,
All, all for thee !

VIOLET (*timidly*).

We are young—we love each other !
We do not want titles and gold, my Norman !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Say you forgive—and yet, what have *you* to pardon ?

ASHDALE.

Everything, madam. Had you shaped my youth
Unto the pauper lot which waits me now,
I had not nursed desires, and pamper'd wants,
Into a second nature : my good sword,
And my free heart, the genii of my fortunes.
Oh, thou hast wrong'd me foully !

NORMAN.

Shame, boy, shame !
Dost thou with ruthless and ungrateful taunts
Answer those agonizing tears ! Ah, mother,
I loved thee more than he does !—Thou repentest !
Thou tak'st her hand !—Forgive him !
(*Solemnly.*)

My dead father !
I never saw thee living ; but methinks
Thy presence fills my soul !—Poor trembling mourner !
If, as I feel, that low-born father loved thee
Not for thy gold and lands—from yonder grave
His spirit would chide the son who for such gauds

Would make the bond and pledge of the love he bore
thee

A source of shame and sorrow—not of solace!—

Hear him then speak in me!—as lightly as

I, from this mantle, shake the glistening dew,

So my soul shakes off the unwholesome thoughts

Born of the cloud and earth.—

(Goes to the torches.)

Look ye—all dead!

My sire—the priest—all who attest my rights!

With a calm hand, unto this flame I yield

What rest, these scrolls!—and as the fire consumes
them,

So wither all that henceforth can dismay

Or haunt thy heart, my mother!—

ASHDALE.

Hold—hold—no!

I am not so base—'twas but a moment's weakness.

Hail the true heir!

(Falling on his breast.)

My brother—oh, my brother!

NORMAN,

A mother and a brother, both!—O joy!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My children in each other's arms!—

ASHDALE.

Now summon

All friends, and let them know the rightful heir.

LADY ARUNDEL.

True—be the justice done—an awful tale :
But ye shall hear me speak it. (*falteringly*) My poor
Percy !
My father's crime too—well—

NORMAN.

You mark her, brother.
Shall we bring this upon her ?—
[*Holding the papers over the torches till they are
consumed.*]

It is past !

Now, never more a bar betwixt *your* hearts
And mine—ah, mother ! *now* thine arms embrace me—
Now thy kiss melts into my soul !—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, bless thee !—

NORMAN.

Hark ! she has bless'd her son—I bid ye witness,
Ye listening Heavens—thou circumambient air :
The ocean sighs it back—and with the murmur
Rustle the happy leaves. All Nature breathes
Aloud—aloft—to the Great Parent's ear,
The blessing of the mother on her child.

ASHDALE,

How nobler this than our nobility !

NORMAN.

Each to his element !—the land has form'd

Thy nature as the hardy ocean mine.
It is no sacrifice. By men and angels!
Better one laurel-leaf the brave hand gathers
Than all the diadems pluck'd from dead men's brows—
So speaks my father's son!—Were there before us
All—all who in this busy and vast mart
Of merchant traffickers—this land of England—
Worship the yellow god—how one great truth
Should shake the sceptred Mammon on his throne!
Here, in our souls, we treasure up the wealth
Fraud cannot filch, nor waste destroy;—the more
'Tis spent, the more we have;—the sweet affections—
The heart's religion—the diviner instincts
Of what we *shall* be when the world is dust!
Is it so, Violet?

VIOLET.

I never loved thee—
No, never—till this hour! A moment since,
When thou wert what the wrong world calls more great,
Methought thou wert less Norman!

ASHDALE.

It must *not* be.
Fire cannot quench thy claims—at least together
We'll live, and share alike.

NORMAN.

Thou shalt find vent
For generous thoughts. Give me what dower thou wilt
With Violet, if ungrieving thou canst yield
That priceless treasure to me now, my brother!

LADY ARUNDEL.

The dower shall halve the heritage.

ASHDALE.

Sweet cousin,

Forgive me!—All the heat of my wild will
Melts in the light of that bright soul,—and never
Did knight upon the hand of some fair queen
Press lips of holier and more loyal homage,
Than this pure kiss which hails a brother's bride.

Enter SIR MAURICE (with a bag).

SIR MAURICE.

All done ere this!—My patent is made out.
Ugh! but the fees are heavy!—Ha, these torches
Confusion!—(*drops the bag.*)

ASHDALE.

Knave, thy hireling is no more!
Take up thy bribe!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Was it for this, base ingrate,
Thou didst ask gold?—a double murder!

SIR MAURICE.

Hush!

He'll hear.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Begone!

SIR MAURICE (*clinging to LORD ASHDALE*)

'Twas meant in kind

ASHDALE.

Off, or I spurn thee, hang-dog !

SIR MAURICE.

Spurn me !—Thou
Shalt live to crawl to me for pence !—All hail,
Arthur, the heir of Arundel !—thy claims—

NORMAN.

Are nought.

SIR MAURICE.

How ?—but the proofs—

NORMAN.

No proofs, but of thy guilt !

SIR MAURICE.

O, wrong'd young man !

[NORMAN *points significantly to the torches.*

I see it—I'm robb'd and murder'd !

NORMAN.

Hence ! and be mute on what concerns thee not—
Or——But I will not threaten thy grey hairs.—
Hence, and repent !

SIR MAURICE.

I thank you kindly, sir :

I am a very poor old Knight !—My Lord,
Your very humble cousin !—To my grave
A sordid, spat-upon, revengeless, worthless,

And rascally poor cousin !—Yes, I'll go
Bury my monies—hang myself—and make
The parish pay the funeral !—Ugh !—I'll spite them !
[*Exit.*

Enter FALKNER, Chaplain, Sailors, &c.

FALKNER.

Captain—the priest—and now the ship's in sight—
Wind and tide serve.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I cannot part from thee,
My long-lost—my beloved !

NORMAN.

We will not part !
Violet the link that binds me to thy hearth,
And makes thy love (tho' secret the true cause)
Not in the world's eye strange ;—we will not part
Till the first moon of wedded love be o'er ;
And then, if glory call me to the seas,
Thine eyes shall lure me back from year to year.

LADY ARUNDEL.

If ever thou repent'st—

ASHDALE.

The half I hold
Thine with the birthright.

NORMAN.

Nay, your love my birthright ;
And for the rest, who can aspire to more
Than a true heart for ever blent with his—
Blessings when absent—welcome when return'd ;—
His merry bark with England's flag to crown her,
Fame for his hopes, and woman in his cares ?

THE END.

Mr Thos. William

M O N E Y :

A Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS;

AS

PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE LADY OF LYONS,” “RICHELIEU,” “RIENZI,” &c.

’Tis a very good world we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in;
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man’s own,
’Tis the very worst world that ever was known!

Old Truism.

Und, es herrscht der Erde Gott, das Geld.—SCHILLER.

SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

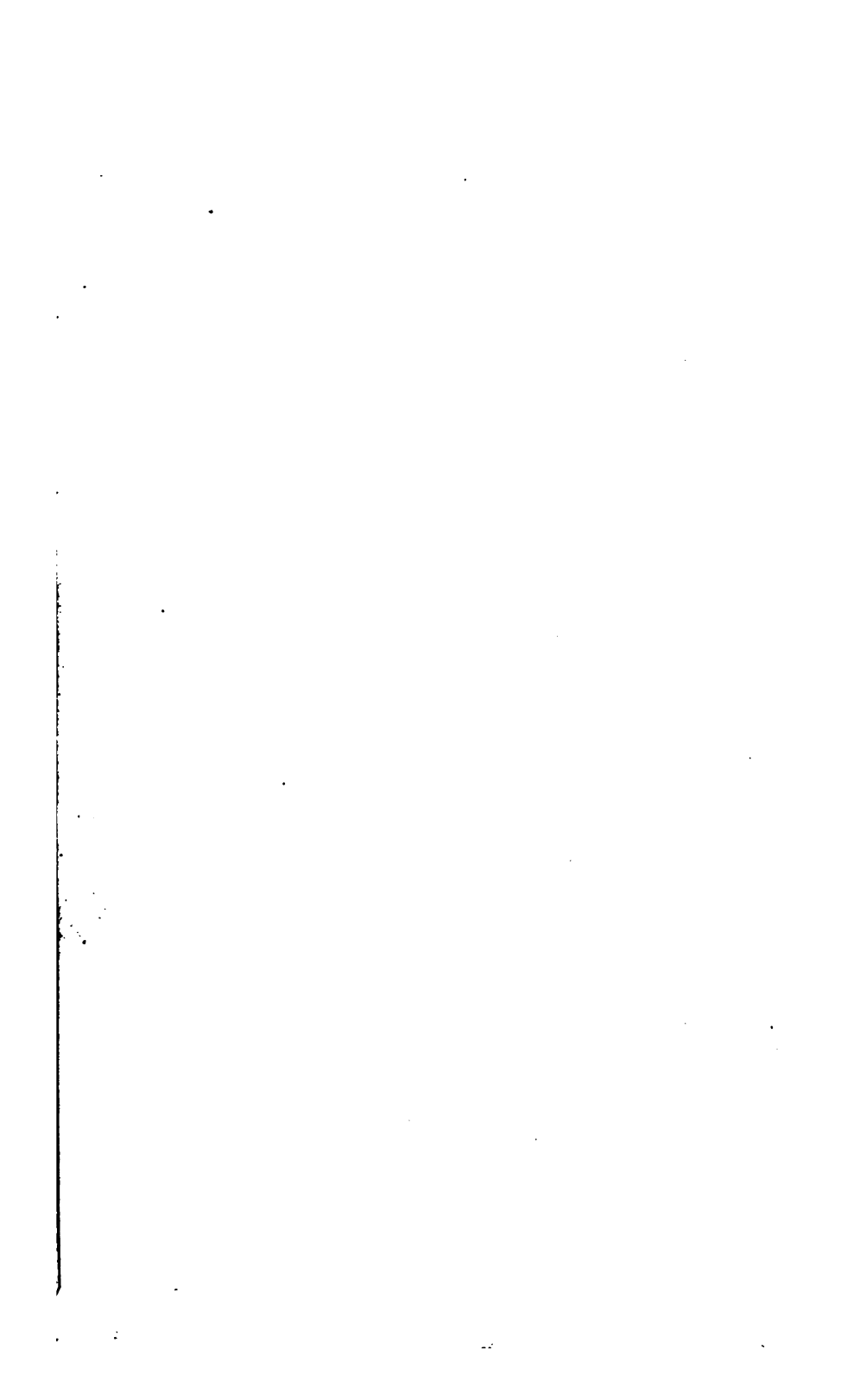
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1840.

LONDON :
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,
Stamford Street.

DEDICATED
To JOHN FORSTER, Esq.,
AUTHOR OF
THE LIVES OF STATESMEN OF THE COMMONWEALTH.
A SLIGHT MEMORIAL
OF SINCERE RESPECT AND CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP;
ALTHOUGH
(FOR WE ARE ALL HUMAN!)
HE HAS IN ONE INSTANCE,
AND BUT ONE,
SUFFERED HIS JUDGMENT
TO BE MISLED
BY TOO GREAT A REGARD
FOR
“ MONEY ! ”

London,
Nov., 1840.



PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,
AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

MEN.

LORD GLOSSMORE	MR. VINING.
SIR JOHN VESEY, BART., Knight of the Guelph, F.R.S., F.S.A.	MR. STRICKLAND.
SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT	MR. LACY.
STOUT	MR. D. REES.
GRAVES	MR. WEBSTER.
EVELYN	MR. MACREADY.
CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH	MR. WRENCH.
SHARP	MR. WALDRON.
TOKE	MR. OXBERRY.
FRANTZ, <i>Tailor</i>	MR. O. SMITH.
TABOURET, <i>Upholsterer</i>	MR. HOWE.
MACFINCH, <i>Jeweller and Silversmith</i>	MR. GOUGH.
MACSTUCCO, <i>Architect</i>	MR. MATHEWS.
KITE, <i>Horse-dealer</i>	MR. SANTER.
CRIMSON, <i>Portrait-painter</i>	MR. GALLOT.
GRAB, <i>Publisher</i>	MR. CAULFIELD.
PATENT, <i>Coach-builder</i>	MR. CLARKE.
<i>Members of the * * * Club, Servants, &c.</i>	

WOMEN.

LADY FRANKLIN, <i>half-sister to SIR JOHN VESEY</i>	MRS. GLOVER.
GEORGINA, <i>daughter to SIR JOHN</i>	MISS HORTON.
CLARA, <i>companion to LADY FRANKLIN, cousin to</i> EVELYN	MISS FAUCIT.
<i>Ladies, &c.</i>	

Scene, London, 1840.

11

11

M O N E Y .

ACT I.

S C E N E I.

A drawing-room in SIR JOHN VESEY's house ; folding-doors at the back, which open on another drawing-room. To the right a table, with newspapers, books, &c. ; to the left a sofa writing-table.

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN (*reading a letter edged with black*).

YES, he says at two precisely. "Dear Sir John, as since the death of my sainted Maria,"—Hum—that's his wife ; she made him a martyr, and now he makes her a saint !

GEORGINA.

Well, as since her death ?—

SIR JOHN (*reading*).

"I have been living in chambers, where I cannot so well invite ladies, you will allow me to bring Mr. Sharp, the lawyer, to read the will of the late Mr.

Mordaunt (to which I am appointed executor) at your house—your daughter being the nearest relation. I shall be with you at two precisely. Henry Graves.”

GEORGINA.

And you really feel sure that poor Mr. Mordaunt has made me his heiress ?

SIR JOHN.

Ay, the richest heiress in England. Can you doubt it ? Are you not his nearest relation ? Niece by your poor mother, his own sister. All the time he was making this enormous fortune in India did we ever miss sending him little reminiscences of our disinterested affection ? When he was last in England, and you only so high, was not my house his home ? Didn't I get a surfeit out of complaisance to his execrable curries and pillaws ? Didn't he smoke his hookah—nasty old—that is, poor dear man—in my best drawing-room ? And did you ever speak without calling him your “handsome uncle ?”—for the excellent creature was as vain as a peacock,—

GEORGINA.

And so ugly,—

SIR JOHN.

The dear deceased ! Alas, he *was*, indeed, like a kangaroo in a jaundice ! And *if*, after all these marks of attachment, you are *not* his heiress, why then the finest feelings of our nature—the ties of blood—the principles of justice—are implanted in us in vain.

GEORGINA.

Beautiful, sir. Was not that in your last speech at the Freemasons' Tavern upon the great Chimney-sweep Question?

SIR JOHN.

Clever girl!—what a memory she has! Sit down, Georgy. Upon this most happy—I mean melancholy—occasion, I feel that I may trust you with a secret. You see this fine house—our fine servants—our fine plate—our fine dinners: every one thinks Sir John Vesey a rich man.

GEORGINA.

And are you not, papa?

SIR JOHN.

Not a bit of it—all humbug, child,—all humbug, upon my soul! As you hazard a minnow to hook in a trout, so one guinea thrown out with address is often the best bait for a hundred. There are two rules in life—FIRST, Men are valued not for what they *are*, but what they *seem* to be. SECONDLY, If you have no merit or money of your own, you must trade on the merits and money of other people. My father got the title by services in the army, and died penniless. On the strength of his services I got a pension of 400*l.* a-year—on the strength of 400*l.* a-year I took credit for 800*l.*: on the strength of 800*l.* a-year I married your mother with 10,000*l.*: on the strength of 10,000*l.* I took credit for 40,000*l.*, and paid Dicky Gossip three guineas a-week to go about everywhere calling me “Stingy Jack.”

GEORGINA.

Ha ! ha ! A disagreeable nickname.

SIR JOHN

But a valuable reputation. When a man is called stingy, it is as much as calling him rich ; and when a man's called rich, why he's a man universally respected. On the strength of my respectability I wheedled a constituency, changed my politics, resigned my seat to a minister, who, to a man of such stake in the country, could offer nothing less in return than a patent office of 2000*l.* a-year. That's the way to succeed in life. Humbug, my dear !—all humbug, upon my soul !

GEORGINA.

I must say that you—

SIR JOHN,

Know the world, to be sure. Now, for your fortune, as I spend all that I have, I can have nothing to leave you ; yet even without counting your uncle, you have always passed for an heiress on the credit of your expectations from the savings of "Stingy Jack." The same with your education. I never grudged anything to make a show—never stuffed your head with histories and homilies ; but you draw, you sing, you dance, you walk well into a room ; and that's the way young ladies are educated now-a-days, in order to become a pride to their parents and a blessing to their husband—that is, when they have caught him. Apropos of a husband : you know we thought of Sir Frederick Blount.

GEORGINA.

Ah, papa, he is charming.

SIR JOHN.

He *was so*, my dear, before we knew your poor uncle was dead ; but an heiress such as you will be should look out for a duke.—Where the deuce is Evelyn this morning ?

GEORGINA.

I've not seen him, papa. What a strange character he is—so sarcastic ; and yet he can be agreeable.

SIR JOHN.

A humorist — a cynic ! one never knows how to take him. My private secretary,—a poor cousin,—has not got a shilling, and yet, hang me if he does not keep us all at a sort of a distance.

GEORGINA.

But why do you take him to live with us, papa, since there's no good to be got by it ?

SIR JOHN.

There you are wrong ; he has a great deal of talent : prepares my speeches, writes my pamphlets, looks up my calculations. My report on the last Commission has got me a great deal of fame, and has put me at the head of the new one. Besides, he *is* our cousin—he has no salary : kindness to a poor relation always tells well in the world ; and benevolence is an useful virtue, particularly when you can have it for nothing. With our

other cousin, Clara, it was different : her father thought fit to leave me her guardian, though she had not a penny—a mere useless incumbrance ; so, you see, I got my half-sister, Lady Franklin, to take her off my hands.

GEORGINA.

How much longer is Lady Franklin's visit to be ?

SIR JOHN.

I don't know, my dear ; the longer the better, for her husband left her a good deal of money at her own disposal. Ah, here she comes.

SCENE II.

LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

My dear sister, we were just loud in your praises. But how's this ?—not in mourning ?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Why should I go into mourning for a man I never saw ?

SIR JOHN.

Still there may be a legacy.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Then there'll be less cause for affliction. Ha !

ha! my dear Sir John, I'm one of those who think feelings a kind of property, and never take credit for them upon false pretences.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Very silly woman! But, Clara, I see you are more attentive to the proper decorum; yet you are very, *very*, VERY distantly connected with the deceased—a third cousin, I think.

CLARA.

Mr. Mordaunt once assisted my father, and these poor robes are all the gratitude I can show him.

SIR JOHN.

Gratitude! humph! I am afraid the minx has got expectations.

LADY FRANKLIN.

So, Mr. Graves is the executor—the will is addressed to him? The same Mr. Graves who is always in black—always lamenting his ill fortune and his sainted Maria, who led him the life of a dog?

SIR JOHN.

The very same. His liveries are black—his carriage is black—he always rides a black galloway—and, faith, if he ever marry again, I think he will show his respect to the sainted Maria by marrying a black woman.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! we shall see.—(*aside*) Poor Graves, I always liked him: he made an excellent husband.

Enter EVELYN (seats himself, and takes up a book, unobserved).

SIR JOHN.

What a crowd of relations this Will brings to light :
Mr. Stout, the Political Economist—Lord Glossmore—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Whose grandfather kept a pawnbroker's shop, and who, accordingly, entertains the profoundest contempt for everything popular, *parvenu*, and plebeian.

SIR JOHN.

Sir Frederick Blount—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Sir Fwedewick Blount, who objects to the letter R as being too *wough*, and therefore drops its acquaintance : one of the new class of prudent young gentlemen, who, not having spirits and constitution for the hearty excesses of their predecessors, entrench themselves in the dignity of a lady-like languor. A man of fashion in the last century was riotous and thoughtless—in this he is tranquil and egotistical. He never does anything that is silly, or says anything that is wise. I beg your pardon, my dear ; I believe Sir Frederick is an admirer of yours, provided, on reflection, he does not see “what harm it could do him” to fall in love with your beauty and expectations. Then, too, our poor cousin the scholar,—Oh, Mr. Evelyn, there you are !

SIR JOHN.

Evelyn—the very person I wanted : where have you been all day ? Have you seen to those papers ?—have you written my epitaph on poor Mordaunt ?—Latin you know ?—have you reported my speech at Exeter Hall ?—have you looked out the debates on the Customs ?—and, oh, have you mended up all the old pens in the study ?

GEORGINA.

And have you brought me the black floss silk ?—have you been to Storr's for my ring ?—and, as we cannot go out on this melancholy occasion, did you call at Hookham's for the last H. B. and the Comic Annual ?

LADY FRANKLIN.

And did you see what was really the matter with my bay horse ?—did you get me the Opera-box ?—did you buy my little Charley his peg-top ?

EVELYN (*always reading*).

Certainly, Paley is right upon that point ; for, put the syllogism thus—(*looking up*) Ma'am—Sir—Miss Vesey—you want something of me ?—Paley observes, that to assist even the undeserving tends to the better regulation of our charitable feelings—no apologies—I am quite at your service.

SIR JOHN.

Now he's in one of his humours !

LADY FRANKLIN.

You allow him strange liberties, Sir John.

EVELYN.

You will be the less surprised at that, madam, when I inform you that Sir John allows me nothing else.—I am now about to draw on his benevolence.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I beg your pardon, sir, and like your spirit. Sir John, I'm in the way, I see ; for I know your benevolence is so delicate that you never allow any one to detect it ! [*Walks aside.*

EVELYN.

I could not do your commissions to-day—I have been to visit a poor woman, who was my nurse and my mother's last friend. She is very poor, *very*—sick—dying—and she owes six months' rent !

SIR JOHN.

You know I should be most happy to do anything for yourself. But the nurse—(*aside*) (some people's nurses are always ill!)—there are so many impostors about!—We'll talk of it to-morrow. This most mournful occasion takes up all my attention. (*Looking at his watch*) Bless me ! so late ! I've letters to write, and—none of the pens are mended ? [*Exit.*

GEORGINA (*taking out her purse*).

I think I will give it to him—And yet, if I don't get

the fortune after all!—Papa allows me so little!—then I *must* have those earrings (*puts up the purse*). Mr. Evelyn, what is the address of your nurse?

EVELYN (*writes and gives it*).

She has a good heart with all her foibles!—Ah! Miss Vesey, if that poor woman had not closed the eyes of my lost mother, Alfred Evelyn would not have been this beggar to your father.

[CLARA *looks over the address*.

GEORGINA.

I will certainly attend to it—(*aside*) if I get the fortune.

SIR JOHN (*calling without*).

Georgy, I say.

GEORGINA.

Yes, papa.

[*Exit*.

EVELYN *has seated himself again at the table (to the right), and leans his face on his hands*.

CLARA.

His noble spirit bowed to this!—Ah, at least here I may give him comfort—(*sits down to write*). But he will recognise my hand.

LADY FRANKLIN.

What bill are you paying, Clara?—putting up a bank-note?

CLARA.

Hush!—O Lady Franklin, you are the kindest of human beings. This is for a poor person—I would not

have her know whence it came, or she would refuse it
Would you?—No,—he knows ~~her~~ handwriting also!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Will I—what?—give the money myself?—with pleasure! Poor Clara—Why this covers all your savings—and I am so rich!

CLARA.

Nay, I would wish to do all myself!—it is a pride—a duty—it is a joy; and I have so few joys! But, hush!—this way.

[They retire into the inner room and converse in dumb show.]

EVELYN.

And thus must I grind out my life for ever!—I am ambitious, and Poverty drags me down!—I have learning, and Poverty makes me the drudge of fools!—I love, and Poverty stands like a spectre before the altar! But, no, no—if, as I believe, I am but loved again, I will—will—what?—turn opium-eater, and dream of the Eden I may never enter!

LADY FRANKLIN (to CLARA).

Yes, I will get my maid to copy and direct this—she writes well, and *her* hand will never be discovered. I will have it done and sent instantly. *[Exit.]*

CLARA advances to the front of the stage, and seats herself—EVELYN reading—Enter SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

SCENE III.

CLARA, EVELYN, SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

No one in the room!—Oh, Miss Douglas!—Pway don't let me disturb you. Where is Miss Vesey—Georgina?

[*Taking CLARA's chair as she rises.*

EVELYN (*looking up, gives CLARA a chair, and re-seats himself*).

(*Aside*). Insolent puppy!

CLARA.

Shall I tell her you are here, Sir Frederick?

BLOUNT.

Not for the world—vewy pwetty girl this companion!

CLARA.

What did you think of the Panorama the other day, cousin Evelyn?

EVELYN (*reading*).

"I cannot talk with civet in the room.

A fine puss gentleman that 's all perfume!"

Rather good lines these.

BLOUNT.

Sir!

EVELYN (*offering the book*).

Don't you think so?—Cowper.

BLOUNT (*declining the book*).

Cowper !

EVELYN.

Cowper.

BLOUNT (*shrugging his shoulders, to CLARA.*)

Stwange person, Mr. Evelyn !—quite a chawacter !—Indeed the Panowama gives you no idea of Naples—a delightful place. I make it a wule to go there ewevy second year—I am vewy fond of twavelling. You'd like Wome (Rome)—bad inns, but vewy fine wuins ; gives you quite a taste for that sort of thing !

EVELYN (*reading*).

“ How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.”

BLOUNT (*aside*).

That fellow Cowper says vewy odd things !—Humph !—it is beneath me to quawwell.—(*Aloud*) It will not take long to wead the will, I suppose. Poor old Mordaunt—I am his nearest male welation. He was vewy eccentwic. By the way, Miss Douglas, did you wemark my cuwicle ? It is bwinging cuwicles into fashion. I should be most happy if you would allow me to dwive you out. Nay—nay—I should, upon my word.

[*Trying to take her hand.*]

EVELYN (*starting up*).

A wasp !—a wasp !—just going to settle. Take care of the wasp, Miss Douglas !

BLOUNT.

A wasp!—where?—don't bring it this way?—some people don't mind them! I've a particular dislike to wasps; they sting damnably!

EVELYN.

I beg pardon—it's only a gad-fly.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Sir John will be happy to see you in his study, Sir Frederick. [*Exit* Servant.]

BLOUNT.

Vewy well. Upon my word, there is something vewy nice about this girl. To be sure, I love Georgina—but if this one would take a fancy to me (*thoughtfully*)—Well, I don't see what harm it could do me!—*Au plaisir!* [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

EVELYN, CLARA.

EVELYN.

Clara!

CLARA.

Cousin!

EVELYN.

And you too are a dependant!

CLARA.

But on Lady Franklin, who seeks to make me forget it.

EVELYN.

Ay, but can the world forget it? 'This insolent condescension—this coxcombry of admiration—more galling than the arrogance of contempt!—Look you now—Robe Beauty in silk and cachemire—hand Virtue into her chariot—lackey their caprices—wrap them from the winds—fence them round with a golden circle—and Virtue and Beauty are as goddesses, both to peasant and to prince. Strip them of the adjuncts—see Beauty and Virtue poor—dependent—solitary—walking the world defenceless; oh, *then*, the devotion changes its character—the same crowd gather eagerly around—fools—fops—libertines—not to worship at the shrine, but to sacrifice the victim!

CLARA.

My cousin, you are cruel!

EVELYN.

Forgive me! There is a something, when a man's heart is better than his fortunes, that makes even affection bitter. Mortification for myself—it has ceased to chafe me. I can mock where I once resented. But *you*—*YOU*, so delicately framed and nurtured—one slight to you—one careless look—one disdainful tone—makes me feel the true curse of the poor man. His pride gives armour to *his own* breast, but it has no shield to protect another!

CLARA.

But I too have pride of my own—I too can smile at the pointless insolence——

EVELYN.

Smile—and he took your hand!—Oh, Clara, you know not the tortures that I suffer hourly! When others approach you—young—fair—rich—the sleek darlings of the world—I accuse you of your very beauty—I writhe beneath every smile that you bestow. No—speak not!—my heart has broke its silence, and you shall hear the rest. For you I have endured the weary bondage of this house—the fool's gibe—the hireling's sneer—the bread, purchased by toils, that should have led me to loftier ends: yes, to see you—hear you—breathe the same air—be ever at hand—that if others slighted, from one at least you might receive the luxury of respect:—for this—for this I have lingered, suffered, and forborne. Oh, Clara! we are orphans both—friendless both; you are all in the world to me: turn not away—my very soul speaks in these words—I LOVE YOU!

CLARA.

No—Evelyn—Alfred—No! say it not—think it not! it were madness.

EVELYN.

Madness!—Nay, hear me yet. I am poor—penniless—a beggar for bread to a dying servant. True!—But I have a heart of iron! I have knowledge—patience—health,—and my love for you gives me at last ambition! I have trifled with my own energies till now, for I despised all things till I loved thee! With you to toil for—your step to support—your path

to smoothe—and I—I, poor Alfred Evelyn—promise at last to win for you even fame and fortune! Do not withdraw your hand—*this* hand—shall it not be mine?

CLARA.

Ah, Evelyn! Never—never!

EVELYN.

Never!

CLARA.

Forget this folly; our union is impossible, and to talk of love were to deceive both!

EVELYN (*bitterly*).

Because I am poor!

CLARA.

And *I too*! A marriage of privation—of penury—of days that dread the morrow! I have seen such a lot! Never return to this again.

EVELYN.

Enough—you are obeyed. I deceived myself—ha!—ha!—I fancied that I too was loved. I, whose youth is already half gone with care and toil!—whose mind is soured—whom nobody *can* love—who ought to have loved no one!

CLARA (*aside*).

And if it were only *I* to suffer, or perhaps to starve!—Oh, what shall I say? Evelyn—Cousin?

EVELYN.

Madam.

CLARA.

Alfred—I—I—

EVELYN.

Reject me !

CLARA.

Yes! It is past!

[*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Let me think. It was yesterday her hand trembled when mine touched it. And the rose I gave her—yes, she pressed her lips to it once when she seemed as if she saw me not. But it was a trap—a trick—for I was as poor then as now. This will be a jest for them all! Well, courage! it is but a poor heart that a coquet's contempt can break! And now that I care for no one, the world is but a great chess-board, and I will sit down in earnest and play with Fortune!

Enter LORD GLOSSMORE preceded by Servant.

SERVANT.

I will tell Sir John, my Lord!

(EVELYN takes up the newspaper.)

GLOSSMORE.

The secretary—hum!—Fine day, Sir; any news from the East?

EVELYN.

Yes!—all the wise men have gone back there!

GLOSSMORE.

Ha, ha!—not all, for here comes Mr. Stout, the Great political economist.

S C E N E V.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN.

STOUT.

Good morning, Glossmore.

GLOSSMORE.

Glossmore!—the Parvenu!

STOUT.

Afraid I might be late—Been detained at the Vestry—Astonishing how ignorant the English poor are!—Took me an hour and a half to beat it into the head of a stupid old widow, with nine children, that to allow her three shillings a-week was against all the rules of public morality!

EVELYN.

Excellent!—admirable!—your hand, Sir!

GLOSSMORE.

What! you approve such doctrines, Mr. Evelyn?
Are old women only fit to be starved!

EVELYN.

Starved! popular delusion! Observe, my Lord—to squander money upon those who starve is only to afford encouragement to starvation!

STOUT.

A very superior person that !

GLOSSMORE.

Atrocious principles ! Give me the good old times when it was the duty of the rich to succour the distressed.

EVELYN.

On second thoughts, *you* are right, my Lord. I, too, know a poor woman—ill—dying—in want. Shall *she*, too, perish ?

GLOSSMORE.

Perish ! horrible !—in a Christian country. Perish ! Heaven forbid !

EVELYN (*holding out his hand*).

What, then, will you give her ?

GLOSSMORE.

Ehem ! Sir—the parish ought to give.

STOUT.

No !—No—No. Certainly not ! (*with great vehemence.*)

GLOSSMORE.

No ! no ! But I say yes ! yes ! And if the parish refuse to maintain the poor, the only way left to a man of firmness and resolution, holding the principles that I do, and adhering to the constitution of our fathers, is to force the poor *on* the parish by never giving them a farthing oneself.

S C E N E V I.

SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, LADY FRANKLIN, GEORGINA,
GLOSSMORE, STOUT, EVELYN.

SIR JOHN.

How d'ye do!—Ah! How d'ye do, gentlemen?
This is a most melancholy meeting! The poor deceased!—what a man he was!

BLOUNT.

I was chwistened Fwedewick after him! He was my first cousin.

SIR JOHN.

And Georgina his own niece—next of kin!—an excellent man, though odd—a kind heart, but no liver! I sent him twice a-year thirty dozen of the Cheltenham waters. It's a comfort to reflect on these little attentions at such a time.

STOUT.

And I, too, sent him the Parliamentary Debates regularly, bound in calf. He was my second cousin—sensible man—and a follower of Malthus: never married to increase the surplus population, and fritter away his money on his own children. And now——

EVELYN.

He reaps the benefit of celibacy in the prospective gratitude of every cousin he had in the world!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Hush! hush! decency, Lady Franklin; decency!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Sharp.

SIR JOHN.

Oh, here's Mr. Graves; that's Sharp, the lawyer, who brought the will from Calcutta.

SCENE VII.

GRAVES, SHARP, SIR JOHN, &c.

Chorus of SIR JOHN, GLOSSMORE, BLOUNT, STOUT.

Ah, Sir—Ah, Mr. Graves!

[*GEORGINA holds her handkerchief to her eyes.*

SIR JOHN.

A sad occasion!

GRAVES.

But everything in life is sad. Be comforted, Miss Vesey. True, you have lost an uncle; but I—I have lost a wife—such a wife!—the first of her sex—and the second cousin of the defunct! Excuse me, Sir John; at the sight of your mourning my wounds bleed afresh.

[*Servants hand round wine and sandwiches.*

SIR JOHN.

Take some refreshment—a glass of wine.

GRAVES.

Thank you!—(very fine sherry!)—Ah! my poor sainted Maria! Sherry was *her* wine: everything reminds me of Maria! Ah, Lady Franklin! *you* knew her. Nothing in life can charm me now. (*Aside.*) A monstrous fine woman that!

SIR JOHN.

And now to business. Evelyn, you may retire.

SHARP (*looking at his notes*).

Evelyn—any relation to Alfred Evelyn?

EVELYN.

The same.

SHARP.

Cousin to the deceased, seven times removed. Be seated, Sir; there may be some legacy, though trifling: all the relations, however distant, should be present.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Then Clara is related—I will go for her. [*Exit.*]

GEORGINA.

Ah, Mr. Evelyn; I hope you will come in for something—a few hundreds, or even more.

SIR JOHN.

Silence! Hush! Whugh! ugh! Attention.

(*While the Lawyer opens the Will, re-enter LADY FRANKLIN and CLARA.*)

SHARP.

The will is very short—being all personal property. He was a man that always came to the point.

SIR JOHN.

I wish there were more like him!—(*Groans and shakes his head.*)

[*Chorus groan and shake their heads.*]

SHARP (*reading*).

“ I, Frederick James Mordaunt, of Calcutta, being, at the present date, of sound mind, though infirm body, do hereby give, will, and bequeath—imprimis, to my second cousin, Benjamin Stout, Esq., of Pall-Mall, London—

[*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*]

Being the value of the Parliamentary Debates, with which he has been pleased to trouble me for some time past—deducting the carriage thereof, which he always forgot to pay—the sum of 14*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.*

[*Chorus breathe more freely.*]

STOUT.

Eh, what!—14*l.*? Oh, hang the old miser!

SIR JOHN.

Decency—decency! Proceed, Sir.

SHARP.

“ Item.—To Sir Frederick Blount, Baronet, my nearest male relative——

[*Chorus exhibit lively emotion.*]

BLOUNT.

Poor old boy!

[*GEORGINA puts her arm over BLOUNT'S chair.*]

SHARP.

“ Being, as I am informed, the best-dressed young gentleman in London, and in testimony to the only merit I ever heard he possessed, the sum of 500*l.* to buy a dressing-case.

[*Chorus breathe more freely ; GEORGINA catches her father's eye, and removes her arm.*]

BLOUNT (*laughing confusedly*).

Ha! Ha! Ha! Vewy poor wit—low!—vewy—vewy low!

SIR JOHN.

Silence, now, will you?

SHARP.

“ Item.—To Charles Lord Glossmore—who asserts that he is my relation—my collection of dried butterflies, and the pedigree of the Mordaunts from the reign of King John.

[*Chorus as before.*]

GLOSSMORE.

Butterflies!—Pedigree!—I disown the plebeian!

SIR JOHN (*angrily*).

Upon my word, this is too revolting! Decency—
go on.

SHARP.

“ Item.—To Sir John Vesey, Baronet, Knight of
the Guelph, F.R.S., F.S.A., &c.—

[*Chorus as before.*]

SIR JOHN.

Hush! *Now* it is really interesting!

SHARP.

“ Who married my sister, and who sends me every year
the Cheltenham waters, which nearly gave me my death
—I bequeath—the empty bottles.

SIR JOHN.

Why, the ungrateful, rascally, old——

CHORUS.

Decency, Sir John—decency!

SHARP.

“ Item.—To Henry Graves, Esq., of the Albany—

[*Chorus as before.*]

GRAVES.

Pooh, gentlemen—my usual luck—not even a ring, I
dare swear!

SHARP.

“ The sum of 5000*l*. in the Three per Cents.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I wish you joy !

GRAVES.

Joy—pooh ! Three per Cents !—Funds sure to go !
Had it been *land*, now—though only an acre !—just
like my luck.

SHARP.

“ Item.—To my niece Georgina Vesey—

[Chorus as before.]

SIR JOHN.

Ah, now it comes !

SHARP.

“ The sum of 10,000*l*. India stock, being, with her
father’s reputed savings, as much as a single woman
ought to possess.

SIR JOHN.

And what the devil, then, does the old fool do with
all his money ?

CHORUS.

Really, Sir John, this is too revolting. Decency !
Hush !

SHARP.

“ And, with the aforesaid legacies and exceptions, I
do will and bequeath the whole of my fortune, in India

stock, Bonds, Exchequer bills, Three per Cents, Consols, and in the Bank of Calcutta (constituting him hereby sole residuary legatee and joint executor with the aforesaid Henry Graves, Esq.), to Alfred Evelyn, now or formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge—

[*Universal excitement.*]

SHARP.

“Being, I am told, an oddity, like myself—the only one of my relations who never fawned on me, and who, having known privation, may the better employ wealth.”—And now, Sir, I have only to wish you joy, and give you this letter from the deceased—I believe it is important.

EVELYN (*crossing over to CLARA*).

Ah, Clara, if you had but loved me !

CLARA (*turning away*).

And his wealth, even more than poverty, separates us for ever !

[*Omnes crowd round to congratulate EVELYN.*]

SIR JOHN (*to GEORGINA*).

Go, child—put a good face on it—he’s an immense match ! My dear fellow, I wish you joy : you are a great man now—a very great man !

EVELYN (*aside*).

And *her* voice alone is silent !

LORD GLOSSMORE.

If I can be of any use to you—

STOUT.

Or I, Sir—

BLOUNT.

Or I? Shall I put you up at the clubs?

SHARP.

You will want a man of business. I transacted all Mr. Mordaunt's affairs.

SIR JOHN.

Tush, tush! Mr. Evelyn is at home *here*—always looked on him as a son! Nothing in the world we would not do for him! Nothing!

EVELYN.

Lend me 10*l*. for my old nurse!

[Chorus put their hands into their pockets.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An anteroom in Evelyn's new house ; at one corner, behind a large screen, MR. SHARP writing at a desk, books and parchments before him.—MR. CRIMSON, the portrait-painter ; MR. GRAB, the publisher ; MR. MACSTUCCO, the architect ; MR. TABOURET, the upholsterer ; MR. MACFINCH, the silversmith ; MR. PATENT, the coachmaker ; MR. KITE, the horse-dealer ; and MR. FRANTZ, the tailor.—(Servants in livery cross to and fro the Stage.)

PATENT (*to FRANTZ, showing a drawing*).

Yes, sir ; this is the Evelyn vis-à-vis ! No one more the fashion than Mr. Evelyn. Money makes the man, sir.

FRANTZ.

But de tailor, de schneider, make de gentleman ! It is Mr. Frantz, of St. James's, who take his measure and his cloth, and who make de fine handsome noble-men and gentry, where de faders and de mutters make only de ugly little naked boys !

MACSTUCCO.

He's a mon o' teeste, Mr. Evelyn. He taulks o' buying a veela (villa), just to pool dune and build oop again. Ah, Mr. Macfinch, a design for a piece of pleete, eh !

MACFINCH (*showing the drawing*).

Yees, sir, the shield o' Alexander the Great, to hold ices and lemonade! It will coost two thousand poond!

MACSTUCCO.

And it's dirt cheap—ye're Scotch, arn't ye?

MACFINCH.

Aberdounshire!—scraitch me, and I'll scraitch you!

Door at the back thrown open.—Enter EVELYN.

EVELYN.

A levee, as usual. Good day. Ah, Tabouret, your designs for the draperies; very well.—And what do you want, Mr. Crimson?

CRIMSON.

Sir, if you'd let me take your portrait, it would make my fortune. Every one says you're the finest judge of paintings.

EVELYN.

Of paintings! paintings! Are you sure I'm a judge of paintings?

CRIMSON.

Oh, sir, did'nt you buy the great Correggio for 4000*l.*?

EVELYN.

True—I see. So 4000*l.* makes me an excellent judge of paintings. I'll call on you, Mr. Crimson,—good day. Mr. Grab—oh, you're the publisher who once refused me 5*l.* for my poem? you are right, it was sad doggrel.

GRAB.

Doggrel! Mr. Evelyn, it was sublime! But times were bad then.

EVELYN.

Very bad times with me.

GRAB.

But, now, Sir, if you give me the preference, I'll push it, Sir,—I'll push it! I only publish for poets in high life, Sir; and a gentleman of your station ought to be pushed!—500*l.* for the poem, Sir!

EVELYN.

500*l.* when I don't want it, where 5*l.* once would have seemed a fortune.

"Now I am rich, what value in the lines!

How the wit brightens,—how the sense refines!"

[*Turns to the rest, who surround him.*

KITE.

Thirty young horses from Yorkshire, sir!

PATENT (*showing drawing*).

The Evelyn vis-à-vis!

MACFINCH (*showing drawing*).

The Evelyn salver!

FRANTZ (*opening his bundle, and with dignity*).

Sare, I have brought de coat—de great Evelyn coat;

EVELYN.

Oh, go to—that is, go home! Make me as celebrated for vis-à-vis', salvers, furniture, and coats, as I

already am for painting, and shortly shall be for poetry.
I resign myself to you—go!

[*Exeunt* MACFINCH, PATENT, &c.]

Enter STOUT.

EVELYN.

Stout, you look heated!

STOUT.

I hear you have just bought the great Groginhole property.

EVELYN.

It is true. Sharp says it's a bargain.

STOUT.

Well, my dear friend Hopkins, member for Groginhole, can't live another month—but the interests of mankind forbid regret for individuals! The patriot Popkins intends to start for the boro' the instant Hopkins is dead!—your interest will secure his election!—now is your time!—put yourself forward in the march of enlightenment!—By all that is bigoted here comes Glossmore!

SCENE II.

STOUT, GLOSSMORE, EVELYN; SHARP, *still at his desk.*

GLOSSMORE.

So lucky to find you at home! Hopkins, of Groginhole, is not long for this world. Popkins, the brewer, is already canvassing underhand (so very ungentleman—

like !). Keep your interest for young Lord CIPHER—a most valuable candidate. This is an awful moment—the CONSTITUTION depends on his return ! Vote for CIPHER !

STOUT.

Popkins is your man !

EVELYN (*musingly*).

CIPHER and Popkins—Popkins and CIPHER ! Enlightenment and Popkins—CIPHER and the Constitution ! I AM puzzled ! Stout, I am not known at Groginhole.

STOUT.

Your *property*'s known there !

EVELYN.

But purity of election—independence of votes—

STOUT.

To be sure : CIPHER bribes *abominably*. Frustrate his schemes—preserve the liberties of the borough—turn every man out of his house who votes against enlightenment and Popkins !

EVELYN.

Right !—down with those who take the liberty to admire any liberty except *our* liberty ! That *is* liberty !

GLOSSMORE.

CIPHER has a stake in the country—will have 50,000*l.* a-year—CIPHER will never give a vote without considering beforehand how people of 50,000*l.* a-year will be affected by the motion.

EVELYN.

Right: for, as without law there would be no property, so to be the law for property is the only proper property of law!—That is law!

STOUT.

Popkins is all for economy—there's a sad waste of the public money—they give the Speaker 5000*l.* a-year, when I've a brother-in-law who takes the chair at the vestry, and who assures me confidentially he'd consent to be Speaker for half the money!

GLOSSMORE.

Enough, Mr. Stout.—Mr. Evelyn has too much at stake for a leveller.

STOUT.

And too much sense for a bigot.

EVELYN.

Mr. Evelyn has no politics at all!—Did you ever play at *battledore*?

BOTH.

Battledore!

EVELYN.

Battledore!—that is, a contest between two parties: both parties knock about something with singular skill—something is kept up—high—low—here—there—everywhere—nowhere! How grave are the players! how anxious the bystanders! how noisy the battledores! But when this something falls to the ground, only fancy—it's nothing but cork and feather! Go, and play by yourselves—I'm no hand at it!

STOUT (*aside*).

Sad ignorance!—Aristocrat!

GLOSSMORE.

Heartless principles!—Parvenu!

STOUT.

Then you don't go *against* us?—I'll bring Popkins to-morrow.

GLOSSMORE.

Keep yourself free till I present Cipher to you.

STOUT.

I must go to inquire after Hopkins. The return of Popkins will be an era in history. [*Exit.*

GLOSSMORE.

I must be off to the club—the eyes of the country are upon Groginhole. If Cipher fail, the constitution is gone! [*Exit.*

EVELYN.

Sharp, come here—let me look at you! You are my agent, my lawyer, my man of business. I believe you honest;—but what *is* honesty?—where does it exist?—in what part of us?

SHARP.

In the heart, I suppose, sir.

EVELYN.

Mr. Sharp, it exists in the breeches' pocket! Observe, I lay this piece of yellow earth on the table—I contemplate you both;—the man there—the gold here! Now, there is many a man in those streets honest as you are, who moves, thinks, feels, and reasons as well as we do; excellent in form—imperishable in soul;

who, if his pockets were three days empty, would sell thought, reason, body, and soul too, for that little coin! Is that the fault of the man?—no! it is the fault of mankind! God made man; behold what mankind have made a god! When I was poor I hated the world; now I am rich I despise it! Fools—knaves—hypocrites!—By the by, Sharp, send 100*l.* to the poor bricklayer whose house was burnt down yesterday.

Enter GRAVES.

Ah, Graves, my dear friend! what a world this is! —a cur of a world, that fawns on its master, and bites the beggar! Ha! ha! it fawns on *me* now, for the beggar has bought the cur!

GRAVES.

It is an atrocious world!—but it will be burnt one day, and that's some comfort!

EVELYN.

Every hour brings its gloomy lesson—the temper sours—the affections wither—the heart hardens into stone! Zounds, Sharp! what do you stand gaping there for?—have you no bowels?—why don't you go and see to the bricklayer? [*Exit SHARP.*]

SCENE III.

GRAVES, EVELYN.

EVELYN.

Graves, of all my new friends—and their name is **Legion**—you are the only one I esteem ; there is sympathy between us—we take the same views of life. I am cordially glad to see you !

GRAVES (*groaning*).

Ah ! why should you be glad to see a man so miserable ?

EVELYN.

Because I am miserable myself !

GRAVES.

You ! Pshaw ! *you* have not been condemned to lose a wife !

EVELYN.

But, plague on it, man, I may be condemned to take one !—Sit down, and listen. I want a confidant !—Left fatherless, when yet a boy, my poor mother grudged herself food, to give me education. Some one had told her that learning was better than house and land—that 's a lie, Graves.

GRAVES.

A scandalous lie, Evelyn !

EVELYN.

On the strength of that lie I was put to school—sent to college, a sizar. Do you know what a sizar is ? In pride he is a gentleman—in knowledge he is a scholar—and he crawls about, amidst gentlemen and scholars, with the livery of a pauper on his back ! I carried off

the great prizes—I became distinguished—I looked to a high degree, leading to a fellowship; that is, an independence for myself—a home for my mother. One day a young lord insulted me—I retorted—he struck me—refused apology—refused redress. I was a sizar!—a Pariah!—a thing to *be* struck! Sir, I was at least a man, and I horsewhipped him in the hall before the eyes of the whole College! A few days, and the lord's chastisement was forgotten. The next day the sizar was expelled—the career of a life blasted. That is the difference between Rich and Poor: it takes a whirlwind to move the one—a breath may uproot the other! I came to London. As long as my mother lived I had one to toil for; and I did toil—did hope—did struggle to be something yet. She died, and then, somehow, my spirit broke—I resigned myself to my fate; the Alps above me seemed too high to ascend—I ceased to care what became of me. At last I submitted to be the poor relation—the hanger-on and gentleman-lackey of Sir John Vesey. But I had an object in that—there was one in that house whom I had loved at the first sight.

GRAVES.

And were you loved again?

EVELYN.

I fancied it, and was deceived. Not an hour before I inherited this mighty wealth, I confessed my love, and was rejected because I was poor. Now, mark: you remember the letter which Sharp gave me when the will was read?

GRAVES.

Perfectly : what were the contents ?

EVELYN.

After hints, cautions, and admonitions—half in irony, half in earnest (Ah, poor Mordaunt had known the world !), it proceeded—but I'll read it to you :—" Having selected you as my heir, because I think money a trust to be placed where it seems likely to be best employed, I now—not impose a condition, but ask a favour, If you have formed no other and insuperable attachment, I could wish to suggest your choice : my two nearest female relations are my niece Georgina, and my third cousin, Clara Douglas, the daughter of a once dear friend. If you could see in either of these one whom you could make your wife, such would be a marriage that, if I live long enough to return to England, I would seek to bring about before I die." My friend, this is not a legal condition—the fortune does not *rest* on it ; yet, need I say that my gratitude considers it a moral obligation ? Several months have elapsed since thus called upon—I ought now to decide : you hear the names—Clara Douglas is the woman who rejected me !

GRAVES.

But now she would accept you !

EVELYN.

And do you think I am so base a slave to passion, that I would owe to my gold what was denied to my affection ?

GRAVES.

But you must choose one, in common gratitude ; you

ought to do so—yes, there you are right. Besides, you are constantly at the house—the world observes it : you must have raised hopes in one of the girls. Yes ; it is time to decide between her whom you love, and her whom you do not !

EVELYN.

Of the two, then, I would rather marry where I should exact the least. A marriage, to which each can bring sober esteem and calm regard, may not be happiness, but it may be content. But to marry one whom you could adore, and whose heart is closed to you—to yearn for the treasure, and only to claim the casket—to worship the statue that you never may warm to life—Oh ! such a marriage would be a hell the more terrible because Paradise was in sight.

GRAVES.

Georgina is pretty, but vain and frivolous.—(*Aside*) But he has no right to be fastidious—he has never known Maria !—(*Aloud.*) Yes, my dear friend, now I think on it, you *will* be as wretched as myself !—When you are married we will mingle our groans together !

EVELYN.

You may misjudge Georgina ; she may have a nobler nature than appears on the surface. On the day, but before the hour, in which the will was read, a letter, in a strange or disguised hand, signed “ *From an unknown friend to Alfred Evelyn,*” and enclosing what to a girl would have been a considerable sum, was sent to a poor woman for whom I had implored charity, and whose address I had given only to Georgina.

GRAVES.

Why not assure yourself?

EVELYN.

Because I have not dared. For sometimes, against my reason, I have hoped that it might be Clara! (*taking a letter from his bosom and looking at it*). No, I can't recognise the hand. Graves, I detest that girl!

GRAVES.

Who? Georgina?

EVELYN.

No; Clara! But I've already, thank Heaven! taken some revenge upon her. Come nearer. (*Whispers*) I've bribed Sharp to say that Mordaunt's letter to me contained a codicil leaving Clara Douglas 20,000*l*.

GRAVES.

And didn't it? How odd, then, not to have mentioned her in his will.

EVELYN.

One of his caprices: besides, Sir John wrote him word that Lady Franklin had adopted her. But I'm glad of it—I've paid the money—she's no more a dependant. No one can insult her now—she owes it all to me, and does not guess it, man—does not guess it!—owes it to me, me whom she rejected;—me, the poor scholar!—Ha! ha!—there's some spite in that, Eh?

GRAVES.

You're a fine fellow, Evelyn, and we understand

each other. Perhaps Clara may have seen the address, and dictated this letter, after all !

EVELYN.

Do you think so ?—I'll go to the house this instant !

GRAVES.

Eh ? Humph ! Then I'll go with you. That Lady Franklin is a fine woman ! If she were not so gay, I think—I could—

EVELYN.

No ; no ; don't think any such thing : women are even worse than men.

GRAVES.

True ; to love, is a boy's madness !

EVELYN.

To feel is to suffer !

GRAVES.

To hope is to be deceived.

EVELYN.

I have done with romance !

GRAVES.

Mine is buried with Maria !

EVELYN.

If Clara did but write this !—

GRAVES.

Make haste, or Lady Franklin will be out !—A vale of tears—a vale of tears !

EVELYN.

A vale of tears, indeed ! [Exit.

Re-enter GRAVES for his hat.

And I left my hat behind me ! Just like my luck !
If I had been bred a hatter, little boys would have come
into the world without heads.* [Exit.

SCENE IV.

*Drawing-rooms at SIR JOHN VESBY'S, as in Scene I.,
Act I.*

LADY FRANKLIN, CLARA, Servant.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Past two, and I have so many places to go to ! Tell
Philipps I want the carriage directly—instantly.

SERVANT.

I beg pardon, my Lady ; Philipps told me to say the
young horse had fallen lame, and could not be used to-
day. [Exit.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Well, on second thought, that is lucky ; now I have
an excuse for not making a great many tedious visits. I

* For this melancholy jest Mr. Graves is indebted to a hypochondriacal abbé. The Author read it some years ago in one of the French *Annales* ; he does not remember which.

must borrow Sir John's horses for the ball to-night. Oh, Clara, you must see my new turban from Carson's—the prettiest thing in the world, and so becoming!

CLARA.

Ah, Lady Franklin, you'll be so sorry—but—but—

LADY FRANKLIN.

But what?

CLARA.

Such a misfortune! poor Smith is in tears—I promised to break it to you. Your little Charley had been writing his copy, and spilt the ink on the table; and Smith not seeing it—and taking out the turban to put in the pearls as you desired—she—she——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! laid it on the table, and the ink spoilt it. Ha! ha! how well I can fancy the face she made! Seriously, on the whole, it is fortunate; for I think I look best, after all, in the black hat and feathers.

CLARA.

Dear Lady Franklin, you really have the sweetest temper!

LADY FRANKLIN.

I hope so—for it's the most becoming turban a woman can wear! Think of that when you marry. Oh, talking of marriage, I've certainly made a conquest of Mr. Graves.

CLARA.

Mr. Graves ! I thought he was inconsolable.

LADY FRANKLIN.

For his sainted Maria ! Poor man ! not contented with plaguing him while she lived, she must needs haunt him now she is dead.

CLARA.

But why does he regret her ?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Why ? Because he has everything to make him happy. Easy-fortune, good health, respectable character. And since it is his delight to be miserable, he takes the only excuse the world will allow him. For the rest—it's the way with widowers ; that is, whenever they mean to marry again. But, my dear Clara, you seem absent—pale—unhappy——tears too ?

CLARA.

No—no—not tears. No !

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ever since Mr. Mordaunt left you 20,000*l.* every one admires you. Sir Frederick is desperately smitten.

CLARA (*with disdain*).

Sir Frederick !

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah ! Clara, be comforted—I know your secret : I am certain that Eve loves you.

CLARA.

He did—it is past now. He misconceived me when he was poor; and now he is rich, it is not for me to explain.

LADY FRANKLIN.

My dear child, happiness is too rare to be sacrificed to a scruple. Why does he come here so often?

CLARA.

Perhaps for Georgina!

Enter SIR JOHN, and turns over the books, &c., on the table, as if to look for the newspaper.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Pooh! Georgina is my niece; she is handsome and accomplished—but her father's worldliness has spoilt her nature—she is not worthy of Evelyn! Behind the humour of his irony there is something noble—something that may yet be great. For his sake as well as yours, let me at least——

CLARA.

Recommend me to his pity! Ah, Lady Franklin! if he addressed me from dictation, I should again refuse him. No; if he cannot read my heart—if he will not *seek* to read it, let it break unknown.

LADY FRANKLIN.

You mistake me, my dear child: let me only tell him that you dictated that letter—that you sent that

money to his old nurse. Poor Clara! it was your little all. He will then know, at least, if avarice be your sin.

CLARA.

He would have guessed it, had *his* love been like *mine*.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Guessed it—nonsense! The handwriting unknown to him—every reason to think it came from Georgina.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Hum! Came from Georgina!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Come, *let* me tell him *this*. I know the effect it would have upon his choice.

CLARA.

Choice! oh, that humiliating word! No, Lady Franklin, no! Promise me!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But—

CLARA.

No! Promise—faithfully—sacredly.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Well, I promise.

CLARA.

You know how fearful is my character—no infant is more timid: if a poor spider cross the floor, you often laugh to see me grow pale and tremble; and yet I

would lay this hand upon the block—I would walk barefoot over the ploughshare of the old ordeal—to save Alfred Evelyn one moment's pain. But I have refused to share his poverty, and I should die with shame if he thought I had now grown enamoured of his wealth. My kind friend, you will keep your promise?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Yes, since it must be so.

CLARA.

Thanks. I—I—forgive me—I am not well.

[*Exit.*

LADY FRANKLIN.

What fools these girls are!—they take as much pains to lose a husband as a poor widow does to get one!

SIR JOHN.

Have you seen the Times newspaper? Where the deuce is the newspaper? I can't find the Times newspaper.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I think it is in my room. Shall I fetch it?

SIR JOHN.

My dear sister—you're the best creature. Do!

[*Exit* LADY FRANKLIN.]

Ugh! you unnatural conspirator against your own family! What can this *letter* be? Ah! I recollect something.

Enter GEORGINA.

GEORGINA.

Papa, I want—

SIR JOHN.

Yes, I know what you want well enough! Tell me—were you aware that Clara had sent money to that old nurse Evelyn bored us about the day of the will?

GEORGINA.

No! He gave me the address, and I promised, if—

SIR JOHN.

Gave you *the address*?—that's lucky! Hush!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Mr. Graves—Mr. Evelyn.

S C E N E V.

GRAVES, EVELYN, SIR JOHN, GEORGINA, LADY FRANKLIN.

LADY FRANKLIN (*returning*).

Here is the newspaper.

GRAVES.

Ay—read the newspapers!—they'll tell you what this world is made of. Daily calendars of roguery and woe! Here, advertisements from quacks, money-

lenders, cheap warehouses, and spotted boys with two heads. So much for dupes and imposters! Turn to the other column—police reports, bankruptcies, swindling, forgery, and a biographical sketch of the snub-nosed man who murdered his own three little cherubs at Pentonville. Do you fancy these but exceptions to the *general* virtue and health of the nation?—turn to the leading article! and your hair will stand on end at the horrible wickedness or melancholy idiotism of that half the population who think differently from yourself. In my day I have seen already eighteen crises, six annihilations of Agriculture and Commerce, four overthrows of the Church, and three last, final, awful, and irremediable destructions of the entire Constitution! And that's a newspaper!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! your usual vein! always so amusing and good humoured!

GRAVES (*frowning and very angry*).

Ma'am—good humoured!—

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! you should always wear that agreeable smile; you look so much younger—so much handsomer—when you smile!

GRAVES (*softened*).

Ma'am——A charming creature, upon my word!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You have not seen the last H. B.? it is excellent.

I think it might make you *laugh*. But, by-the-by, I don't think you can laugh.

GRAVES.

Ma'am—I have not laughed since the death of my sainted Ma——.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ah! and that spiteful Sir Frederick says you never laugh, because—But you 'll be angry?

GRAVES.

Angry!—pooh! I despise Sir Frederick too much to let anything he says have the smallest influence over me! He says I don't laugh, because—

LADY FRANKLIN.

You have lost your front teeth!

GRAVES.

Lost my front teeth! Upon my word! Ha! ha! ha! That's too good—capital! Ha! ha! ha! (*laughing from ear to ear*).

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! ha!

[*They retire to the table in the inner drawing-room.*]

EVELYN (*aside*).

Of course Clara will not appear!—avoids me as usual! But what do I care?—what is she to me? Nothing! I'll swear this is her glove!—no one else has so small a hand. She'll miss it—so—so! Nobody's looking—I'll keep it, just to vex her.

SIR JOHN (*to* GEORGINA).

Yes—yes—leave me to manage: you took his portrait, as I told you.

GEORGINA.

Yes—but I could not catch the expression. I got Clara to touch it up.

SIR JOHN.

That girl's always in the way!

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

Good morning, dear John. Ah, Miss Vesey, you have no idea of the conquests you made at Almack's last night!

EVELYN (*examining him curiously while SMOOTH is talking to* GEORGINA).

And that's the celebrated Dudley Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

More commonly called Deadly Smooth!—the finest player at whist, écarté, billiards, chess, and piquet, between this and the Pyramids—the sweetest manners!—always calls you by your Christian name. But take care how you play at cards with him!

EVELYN.

He does not cheat, I suppose?

SIR JOHN.

Hist! *No!*—but he always *wins!* Eats up a brace of lords and a score or two of guardsmen every season, and runs through a man's fortune like a course of the Carlsbad waters. He's an uncommonly clever fellow!

EVELYN.

Clever? yes! When a man steals a loaf, we cry down the knavery—when a man diverts his neighbour's mill-stream to grind his own corn, we cry up the cleverness!—And every one courts Captain Dudley Smooth!

SIR JOHN.

Why, who could offend him? the best-bred, civilest creature—and a dead shot! There is not a cleverer man in the three kingdoms.

EVELYN.

A study—a study!—let me examine him! Such men are living satires on the world.

SMOOTH (*passing his arm caressingly over SIR JOHN's shoulder*).

My dear John, how well you are looking! A new lease of life! Introduce me to Mr. Evelyn.

EVELYN.

Sir, it's an honour I've long ardently desired.

[*They bow and shake hands.*]

Enter SIR FREDERICK BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

How d'ye do, Sir John. Ah, Evelyn—I wished so much to see you!

EVELYN.

'T is my misfortune to be visible!

BLOUNT.

A little this way. You know, perhaps, that I once paid my addresses to Miss Vesey; but since that vewy

eccentric will Sir John has shuffled me off, and hints at a prior attachment—(*aside*) which I know to be false.

EVELYN (*seeing CLARA*).

A prior attachment!—(Ha! Clara!) Well, another time, my dear Blount.

Enter CLARA.

BLOUNT.

Stay a moment—I want you to do me a favour with regard to Miss Douglas!

EVELYN.

Miss Douglas!

BLOUNT.

Yes;—you see, though Georgina has great expectations, and Stingy Jack will leave her all that he has, yet she has only her legacy of 10,000*l.* at the moment—no doubt closely settled on herself too: Clara has 20,000*l.* And, I think, Clara always liked me a little.

EVELYN.

You! I dare say she did!

BLOUNT.

It is whispered about that you mean to propose to Georgina. Nay, Sir John more than hinted that was her prior attachment!

EVELYN.

Indeed!

BLOUNT.

Now, as you are all in all with the family, if you could say a word for me to Miss Douglas, I don't see what harm it could do me!—(*aside*) I will punish Georgina for her puerfidy.

EVELYN.

'Sdeath, man! speak for yourself! you are just the sort of man for young ladies to like—they understand you—you're of their own level. Pshaw! you're too modest—you want no mediator!

BLOUNT.

My dear fellow, you flatter me. I'm well enough in my way. But you, you know, would cawwy ewewy-thing before you!—you're so confoundedly wick!

EVELYN (*turning to CLARA*).

Miss Douglas, what do you think of Sir Frederick Blount? Observe him. He is well dressed—young—tolerably handsome (BLOUNT *bowing*)—bows with an air—has plenty of small talk—everything to captivate. Yet he thinks that if he and I were suitors to the same lady, I should be more successful because I am richer? What say you? Is love an auction? and *do* women's hearts go to the highest bidder?

CLARA.

Their hearts?—No!

EVELYN.

But their hands—yes! You turn away. Ah, you dare not answer that question!

GEORGINA (*aside*).

Sir Frederick flirting with Clara? I'll punish him for his perfidy. *You* are the last person to talk so, Mr. Evelyn!—you, whose wealth is your smallest attraction—you, whom every one admires, so witty, such taste, such talent! Ah, I'm very foolish!

SIR JOHN (*clapping him on the shoulder*).

You must not turn my little girl's head. Oh, you're a sad fellow! Apropos, I must show you Georgina's last drawings. She has wonderfully improved since you gave her lessons in perspective.

GEORGINA.

No papa—No! pray, no! Nay, don't!

SIR JOHN.

Nonsense, child!—it's very odd, but she's more afraid of *you* than of any one!

SMOOTH (*to BLOUNT, taking snuff*).

He's an excellent father, our dear John! and supplies the place of a mother to her.

[*Turns away to LADY FRANKLIN and GRAVES.*

[EVELYN and GEORGINA *seat themselves, and look over the drawings*; SIR JOHN *leans over them*; SIR FREDERICK *converses with CLARA*; EVELYN *watching them*.

EVELYN.

Beautiful!—a view from Tivoli. (Death!—she looks down while he speaks to her!) Is there a little

fault in that colouring? (She positively blushes!) But this Jupiter is superb. (What a d——d coxcomb it is!) (*Rising*) Oh, she certainly loves him—I too can be loved elsewhere—I too can see smiles and blushes on the face of another!

GEORGINA.

Are you not well?

EVELYN.

I beg pardon. Yes, you are indeed improved! Ah, who so accomplished as Miss Vesey?

[*Takes up the drawings; pays her marked attention in dumb show.*]

CLARA.

Yes, Sir Frederick, the concert was very crowded! Ah, I see that Georgina consoles him for the past! He has only praises for her, nothing but taunts for me!

BLOUNT.

I wish you would take my opewa-box next Saturday—'t is the best in the house. I'm not wick, but I spend what I have on myself! I make a point to have ewewything the best in a quiet way. Best opewa-box—best dogs—best horses—best house of its kind. I want nothing to complete my establishment but the best wife!

CLARA (*abstractedly*).

That will come in good time, Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Oh, it will come—will it? Georgina refused the trifle—*she* courts him (*taking up a portrait*). Why, what is this?—my own——

GEORGINA.

You must not look at that—you must not indeed. I did not know it was there!

SIR JOHN.

Your own portrait, Evelyn. Why, child! I was not aware you took likenesses?—that's something new! Upon my word it's a strong resemblance.

GEORGINA.

Oh, no—it does not do him justice. Give it to me. I will tear it.—(*Aside*) That odious Sir Frederick!

EVELYN.

Nay, you shall not.

CLARA.

So—so—he loves her then! Misery—misery! But he shall not perceive it! No—no—I can be proud too. Ha! ha!—Sir Frederick—excellent—excellent—you are so entertaining—ha! ha! (*laughs hysterically.*)

EVELYN.

Oh, the affectation of coquets—they cannot even laugh naturally!

[CLARA looks at him reproachfully, and walks aside with SIR FREDERICK.

But where is the new guitar you meant to buy, Miss Vesey—the one inlaid with tortoiseshell? It is near a year since you set your heart on it, and I don't see it yet!

SIR JOHN (*taking him aside confidentially*).

The guitar—oh, to tell you a secret—she applied the money I gave her for it to a case of charity several months ago—the very day the will was read. I saw the letter lying on the table, with the money in it. Mind, not a word to her—she'd never forgive me!

EVELYN.

Letter!—money! What was the name of the person she relieved?—not Stanton?

SIR JOHN.

I don't remember indeed.

EVELYN (*taking out the letter*).

This is not her hand!

SIR JOHN.

No! I observed at the time it was not her hand, but I got out from her that she did not wish the thing to *be known*, and had employed some one else to copy it. May I see the letter? Yes, I think this is the wording. But I did not mean to tell you what case of charity it was. I promised Georgy I would not. Still,

how did she know Mrs. Stanton's address?—you never gave it to me!

EVELYN.

I gave it to her, Sir John.

CLARA (*at the distance*).

Yes, I'll go to the opera, if Lady Franklin will. Do go, dear Lady Franklin!—on Saturday, then, Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Sir John, to a man like me, this simple act of unostentatious generosity is worth all the accomplishments in the world. A good heart—a tender disposition—a charity that shuns the day—a modesty that blushes at its own excellence—an impulse towards something more divine than Mammon;—such are the true accomplishments which preserve beauty for ever young. Such I have sought in the partner I would take for life;—such I have found—alas! not where I had dreamed!—Miss Vesey, I will be honest—I say, then, frankly—(*as CLARA approaches, raising his voice and looking fixedly at her*)—I have loved another—deeply — truly — bitterly — *vainly*! I cannot offer to you, as I did to her, the fair first love of the human heart—rich with all its blossoms and its verdure. But if esteem—if gratitude—if an earnest resolve to conquer every recollection that would wander from your image;—if these can tempt you to accept my hand and

fortune, my life shall be a study to deserve your confidence.

[CLARA *stands motionless, clasping her hands, and then slowly seats herself.*

SIR JOHN.

The happiest day of my life !

[CLARA *falls back in her chair.*

EVELYN (*darting forward*). (*Aside.*)

She is pale ; she faints ! What have I done ? Oh, heaven !—Clara !

CLARA (*rising with a smile*).

Be happy, my cousin—be happy ! Yes, with my whole heart I say it—be happy, Alfred Evelyn !

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'S house.

SIR JOHN, GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

And he has not pressed you to fix the wedding-day?

GEORGINA.

No; and since he proposed he comes here so seldom, and seems so gloomy. Heigho! Poor Sir Frederick was twenty times more amusing.

SIR JOHN.

But Evelyn is fifty times as rich!

GEORGINA.

Sir Frederick *dresses* so well!

SIR JOHN.

You'll have magnificent diamonds! But a word with you: I saw you yesterday in the square with Sir Frederick; that must not happen again. When a young lady is engaged to one man, nothing is so indecorous as to flirt with another. It might endanger your marriage itself. Oh, it's highly indecorous!

GEORGINA.

Don't be afraid, papa—he takes up with Clara.

SIR JOHN.

Who ? Evelyn ? .

GEORGINA.

Sir Frederick. Heigho !—I hate artful girls.

SIR JOHN.

The settlements will be splendid ! if anything happens, nothing can be handsomer than your jointure.

GEORGINA.

My own kind papa, you always put things so pleasantly. But do you not fear lest he discover that Clara wrote the letter ?

SIR JOHN.

No ; and I shall get Clara out of the house. But there is something else that makes me very uneasy. You know that no sooner did Evelyn come into possession of his fortune than he launched out in the style of a prince. His house in London is a palace, and he has bought a great estate in the country. Look how he lives !—Balls—banquets—fine arts—fiddlers—charities—and the devil to pay !

GEORGINA.

But if he can afford it—

SIR JOHN.

Oh ! as long as he stopped *there* I had no apprehension ; but since he proposed ~~for~~ you he is more

extravagant than ever. They say he has taken to gambling! and he is always with Captain Smooth. No fortune can stand Deadly Smooth! If he gets into a scrape he may fall off from the settlements. We must press the marriage at once.

GEORGINA.

Heigho! Poor Frederick! You don't think he is *really* attached to Clara?

SIR JOHN.

Upon my word I can't say. Put on your bonnet, and come to Storr and Mortimer's to choose the jewels.

GEORGINA.

The jewels!—yes—the drive will do me good. So you'll send away Clara?—she's so very deceitful.

SIR JOHN.

Never fear—yes—tell her to come to me.

[*Exit* GEORGINA.]

Yes; I must press on this marriage; Georgina has not wit enough to manage him—at least till he's her husband, and then all women find it smooth sailing. This match will make me a man of prodigious importance! I suspect he'll give me up her ten thousand pounds. I can't think of his taking to gambling, for I love him as a son—and I look on his money as my own.

SCENE II.

CLARA, SIR JOHN.

SIR JOHN.

Clara, my love!

CLARA.

Sir—

SIR JOHN.

My dear, what I am going to say may appear a little rude and unkind, but you know my character is frankness.—To the point, then: my poor child, I'm aware of your attachment to Mr. Evelyn——

CLARA.

Sir! *my attachment?*

SIR JOHN.

It is generally remarked. Lady Kind says you are falling away. My poor girl, I pity you—I do, indeed!* “Now, there's that letter you wrote to his old nurse—it has got about somehow—and the world is “so ill natured. I don't know if I did right; but, after “he had proposed to Georgy—(of course not before!) “—I thought it so unpleasant for you, as a young lady, “to be suspected of anything forward with respect to a “man who was not attached to you, that I rather let it “be supposed that Georgy *herself* wrote the letter.

CLARA.

“Sir, I don't know what right you had to——

* The lines between inverted commas are omitted on the stage.

SIR JOHN.

“That’s very true, my dear ; and I’ve been thinking
“since that I ought perhaps to tell Mr. Evelyn that
“the letter was yours—shall I ?

CLARA.

“No, Sir ; I beg you will not. I—I”—(*weeps.*)

SIR JOHN.

My dear Clara, don’t take on ; I would not have said
this for the world, if I was not a little anxious about
my own girl. Georgina is so unhappy at what every
one says of your attachment——

CLARA.

Every one ?—Oh, torture !

SIR JOHN.

That it preys on her spirits—it even irritates her
temper ! You see, though the marriage will take place
almost immediately, Mr. Evelyn does not come so often
as he ought. In a word, I fear these little jealousies and
suspicions will tend to embitter their future union—I’m
a father—forgive me.

CLARA.

Embitter their union ! Oh, never ! What would
you have me do, Sir ?

SIR JOHN.

Why, you’re now independent. Lady Franklin
seems resolved to stay in town. Surely she can’t mean
to take her money out of the family by some foolish
inclination for Mr. Graves ! He’s always purring and

whining about the house, like a black cat in the me-grims. What think you, eh?

CLARA.

Sir, it was of myself—my unhappy self—you were speaking.

SIR JOHN.

Sly!—True; true! What I meant to say was this:—Lady Franklin persists in staying *here*: you are your own mistress. Mrs. Carlton, aunt to my late wife, is going abroad for a short time, and would be delighted if you would accompany her.

CLARA.

It is the very favour I would have asked of you. (*Aside.*) I shall escape at least the struggle and the shame. When does she go?

SIR JOHN.

In five days—next Monday.—You forgive me?

CLARA.

Sir, I thank you.

SIR JOHN (*drawing the table*).

Suppose, then, you write a line to her yourself, and settle it at once?

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

The carriage, Sir John; Miss Vesey is quite ready.

SIR JOHN.

“Wait a moment. SHALL I tell Evelyn you wrote
“the letter?”

CLARA.

“ No, Sir, I implore you.

SIR JOHN.

“ But it would be awkward for Georgy, if discovered.

CLARA.

“ It *never* shall be.

SIR JOHN.

“ Well, well, as you please. I know nothing could be “ so painful to a young lady of pride and delicacy.”—— James, if Mr. Serious, the clergyman, calls, say I am gone to the great meeting at Exeter Hall: if Lord Spruce calls, say you believe I’m gone to the rehearsal of Cinderella. Oh! and if MacFinch should come— (MacFinch, who duns me three times a-week)—say I’ve hurried off to Garraways to bid for the great Bulstrode estate. Just put the Duke of Lofty’s card carelessly on the hall table. And, I say, James, I expect two gentlemen a little before dinner—Mr. Squab the Radical, and Mr. Qualm of the great Marylebone Conservative Association. Show Squab into the study, and be sure to give him the “ Weekly True Sun,”—Qualm into the back parlour with the “ Times” and the “ Morning Post.” One must have a little management in this world. All humbug!—all humbug, upon my soul!

[*Exit.*

CLARA (*folding the letter*).

There—it is decided! A few days, and we are parted for ever!—a few weeks, and another will bear his name—his wife! Oh, happy fate! She will have the right to say to him—though the whole world should hear her—“ I am thine!” And I embitter

their lot—I am the cloud upon their joyous sunshine !
And yet, O Alfred ! if she loves thee—if she knows
thee—if she values thee—and, when thou wrong'st her,
if she can forgive, as I do,—I can bless her, when far
away, and join her name in my prayers for thee !

EVELYN (*without*).

Miss Vesey just gone ? Well, I will write a line.

SCENE III.

EVELYN, CLARA.

EVELYN.

(*Aside.*) So—Clara ! Do not let me disturb you,
Miss Douglas.

CLARA (*going*).

Nay, I have done.

EVELYN.

I see that my presence is always odious to you. It
is a reason why I come so seldom. But be cheered,
Madam : I am here but to fix the day of my marriage,
and I shall then go into the country—till—till——In
short, this is the last time my visit will banish you from
the room I enter.

CLARA (*aside*).

The last time !—and we shall then meet no more !—
And to part thus for ever—in scorn—in anger—I can-
not bear it !—(*Approaching him.*) Alfred, my cousin,
it is true this may be the last time we shall meet—I
have made my arrangements to quit England.

EVELYN.

To quit England ?

CLARA.

But, before I go, let me thank you for many a past kindness, which it is not for an orphan easily to forget.

EVELYN (*mechanically*).

To quit England !

CLARA.

I have long wished it : but enough of me.—Evelyn, now that you are betrothed to another—now, without recurring to the past—now, without the fear of mutual error and mistake—something of our old friendship may at least return to us.—And if, too, I dared, I have that on my mind which only a friend—a sister—might presume to say to you.

EVELYN (*moved*).

Miss Douglas—Clara—if there is aught that I could do—if, while hundreds—strangers—beggars—tell me that I have the power, by opening or shutting this worthless hand, to bid sorrow rejoice or poverty despair—if—if my life—my heart's blood—could render to *you* one such service as my gold can give to others—why, speak !—and the past you allude to,—yes, even that bitter past,—I will cancel and forget !

CLARA (*holding out her hand*).

We are friends, then !—you are again my cousin !—my brother !

EVELYN (*dropping her hand*).

Brother !—Ah ! say on !



CLARA.

I speak, then, as a sister—herself weak, inexperienced, ignorant, nothing—*might* speak to a brother, in whose career she felt the ambition of a man. Oh, Evelyn! when you inherited this vast wealth I pleased myself with imagining how you would wield the power delegated to your hands. I knew your benevolence—your intellect—your genius!—the ardent mind couched beneath the cold sarcasm of a long-baffled spirit! I saw before me the noble and bright career open to you at last—and I often thought that, in after years, when far away—as I soon shall be—I should hear your name identified, not with what fortune can give the base, but with deeds and ends to which, for the *great*, fortune is but the instrument;—I often thought that I should say to my own heart—weeping proud and delicious tears—“And once this man loved me!”

EVELYN.

No more, Clara!—oh, heavens!—no more!

CLARA.

But *has* it been so?—have you been true to your own self?—Pomp—parade—luxuries—pleasures—follies!—all these might distinguish others, they do but belie the ambition and the soul of Alfred Evelyn!—Oh! pardon me—I am too bold—I pain—I offend you.—Ah, I should not have dared thus much had I not thought, at times, that—that—

EVELYN.

That these follies—these vanities—this dalliance with a loftier fate—were your own work! You thought

that, and you were right! Perhaps, indeed, after a youth steeped to the lips in the hyssop and gall of penury—perhaps I might have wished royally to know the full value of that dazzling and starry life which, from the last step in the ladder, I had seen indignantly and from afar. But a month—a week—would have sufficed for that experience. Experience!—Oh, how soon we learn that hearts are as cold and souls as vile—no matter whether the sun shine on the noble in his palace, or the rain drench the rags of the beggar cowering at the porch. The extremes of life differ but in this:—Above, *Vice* smiles and revels—below, *Crime* frowns and starves. But you—did not you reject me because I was poor? Despise me if you please!—my revenge might be unworthy—I wished to show you the luxuries, the gaud, the splendour I thought you prized,—to surround with the attributes your sex seems most to value the station that, had you loved me, it would have been yours to command. But vain—vain alike my poverty and my wealth! You loved me not in either, and my fate is sealed!

CLARA.

A happy fate, Evelyn!—you love!

EVELYN.

And at last I am beloved.—(*After a pause, and turning to her abruptly*) Do you doubt it?

CLARA.

No, I believe it firmly!—(*Aside*) Were it possible for her not to love him?

EVELYN.

Georgina, perhaps, is vain—and light—and—

CLARA.

No—think it not ! Once removed from the worldly atmosphere of her father's councils, and you will form and raise her to your own level. She is so young yet—she has beauty, cheerfulness, and temper ;—the rest you will give, if you will but yet do justice to your own nature. And, now that there is nothing unkind between us—not even regret—and surely (*with a smile*) not revenge, my cousin—you will rise to your nobler self—and so, farewell !

EVELYN.

No ; stay—one moment ;—you still feel interest in my fate ! Have I been deceived ? Oh, why—why did you spurn the heart whose offerings were lavished at your feet ? Could you still—still—— ? Distraction—I know not what I say !—my honour pledged to another—my vows accepted and returned ! Go, Clara ; it is best so ! Yet you will miss some one, perhaps, more than me—some one to whose follies you have been more indulgent—some one to whom you would permit a yet tenderer name than that of brother !

CLARA (*aside*).

It will make him, perhaps, happier to think it !—Think so, if you will !—but part friends.

EVELYN.

Friends—and that is all ! Look you, this is life !—

The eyes that charmed away every sorrow—the hand whose lightest touch thrilled to the very core—the presence that, like moonlight, shed its own hallowing beauty over the meanest things;—a little while—a year—a month—a day—and we smile that we could dream so idly. All—all—the sweet enchantment, known but once, never to return again, vanished from the world! And the one who forgets the soonest—the one who robs your earth for ever of its summer—comes to you with a careless lip, and says—“Let us part friends!”——Go, Clara,—go,—and be happy if you can!

CLARA (*weeping*).

Cruel—cruel—to the last!——Heaven forgive you, Alfred!

[*Exit.*]

EVELYN.

Soft!—let me recall her words, her tones, her looks. *Does she love me?* She defends her rival—she did not deny it when I charged her with attachment to another: and yet—and yet—there is a voice at my heart which tells me I have been the rash slave of a jealous anger.—But I have made my choice—I must abide the issue!

Enter GRAVES, preceded by Servant.

Lady Franklin is dressing, Sir.

SCENE IV.

GRAVES, EVELYN.

GRAVES.

Well, I'll wait. (*Exit Servant.*) She was worthy to have known the lost Maria! So considerate to ask me hither—not to console me, *that* is impossible—but to indulge the luxury of woe. It will be a mournful scene.—(*Seeing EVELYN*) Is that you, Evelyn?—I have just heard that the borough of Groginhole is vacant at last. Why not stand yourself?—with your property you might come in without even a personal canvass.

EVELYN.

I, who despise these contests for the colour of a straw—this everlasting litigation of Authority *versus* Man—I to be one of the wranglers?—never!

GRAVES.

You are quite right, and I beg your pardon.

EVELYN.

(*Aside.*) And yet Clara spoke of ambition. She would regret me if I could be distinguished.—(*Aloud.*) To be sure, after all, Graves, corrupt as mankind are, it is our duty to try at least to make them a little better. An Englishman owes something to his country.

GRAVES.

He does, indeed! (*counting on his fingers*) East winds, Fogs, Rheumatism, Pulmonary complaints, and Taxes—(*EVELYN walks about in disorder.*) You

seem agitated—a quarrel with your intended? Oh! when you've been married a month, you won't know what to do without one!

EVELYN.

You are a pleasant comforter.

GRAVES.

Do you deserve a comforter? One morning you tell me you love Clara, or at least detest her, which is the same thing—(poor Maria often said she detested *me*)—and that very afternoon you propose to Georgina!

EVELYN.

Clara will easily console herself—thanks to Sir Frederick!

GRAVES.

He is young!

EVELYN.

Good looking!

GRAVES.

A coxcomb!

EVELYN.

And therefore irresistible!

GRAVES.

Nevertheless, Clara has had the bad taste to refuse him. I have it from Lady Franklin, to whom he confided his despair in re-arranging his neckcloth.

EVELYN.

My dear friend—is it possible?

GRAVES.

But what then? You *must* marry Georgina, who, to believe Lady Franklin, is sincerely attached to—your fortune. Go and hang yourself, Evelyn; you have been duped by them.

EVELYN.

By them—bah! If deceived, I have been my own dupe. Is it not a strange thing that in matters of reason—of the arithmetic and logic of life—we are sensible, shrewd, prudent men? But touch our hearts—move our passions—take us for an instant from the hard safety of worldly calculation—and the philosopher is duller than the fool! *Duped*—if I thought it!—

GRAVES.

To be sure!—you tried Clara in your *poverty*; it was a safe experiment to try Georgina in your *wealth*.

EVELYN.

Ha! that is true—very true. Go on.

GRAVES.

You'll have an excellent father-in-law. Sir John positively weeps when he talks of your income!

EVELYN.

Sir John, possibly—but Georgina?

GRAVES.

Plays affection to you in the afternoon, after practising first with Sir Frederick in the morning.

EVELYN.

On your life, Sir, be serious: what do you mean?

GRAVES.

That in passing this way I see her very often walking in the square with Sir Frederick.

EVELYN.

Ha ! say you so ?

GRAVES.

What then ? Man is born to be deceived. You look nervous—your hand trembles ; that comes of gaming. They say at the clubs that you play deeply.

EVELYN.

Ha ! ha ! Do they say that ?—a few hundreds lost or won—a cheap opiate—anything that can lay the memory to sleep. The poor man drinks and the rich man gambles—the same motive to both ! But you are right—it is a base resource—I will play no more.

GRAVES.

I am delighted to hear it, for your friend Captain Smooth has ruined half the young heirs in London. To play with him is to advertise yourself a bankrupt. Even Sir John is alarmed. I met him just now in Pall Mall ; he made me stop, and implored me to speak to you. By the by, I forgot—do you bank with Flash, Brisk, Credit, and Co. ?

EVELYN.

So, Sir John is alarmed ?—(*Aside.*) Gulled by this coggng charlatan ?—Aha ! I may beat him yet at his own weapons !—Humph ! Bank with Flash ! Why do you ask me ?

GRAVES.

Because Sir John has just heard that they are in a very bad way, and begs you to withdraw anything you have in their hands.

EVELYN.

I'll see to it. So Sir John is *alarmed* at my gambling?

GRAVES.

Terribly! He even told me he should go himself to the club, this evening, to watch you.

EVELYN.

To watch me!—good—I will be there.

GRAVES.

But you will promise not to play.

EVELYN.

Yes—to play. I feel it is impossible to give it up!

GRAVES.

No—no! 'Sdeath, man! be as wretched as you please: break your heart, that's nothing! but damme, take care of your pockets!

EVELYN.

I will be there—I will play with Captain Smooth—I will lose as much as I please—thousands—millions—billions; and if he presume to spy on my losses, hang me if I don't lose Sir John himself into the bargain!

(*Going out and returning*) I am so absent! What was the bank you mentioned? Flash, Brisk, and Credit. Bless me, how unlucky! and it's too late to draw out to-day. Tell Sir John I'm very much obliged to him, and he'll find me at the club any time before daybreak hard at work with my friend Smooth!

[*Exit.*]

GRAVES.

He's certainly crazy! but I don't wonder at it. What the approach of the dog-days is to the canine species, the approach of the honeymoon is to the human race.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Lady Franklin's compliments—she will see you in the *boudoir*, Sir.

GRAVES.

In the *boudoir*!—go, go—I'll come directly.

[*Exit Servant.*]

My heart beats—it must be for grief. Poor Maria! (*Searching his pockets for his handkerchief.*) Not a white one—just like my luck: I call on a lady to talk of the dear departed, and I've nothing about me but a cursed gaudy, flaunting, red, yellow, and blue abomination from India, which it's even indecent for a disconsolate widower to exhibit. Ah! Fortune never ceases to torment the susceptible. The *boudoir*!—ha! ha! the *boudoir*!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

A Boudoir in the same house.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Now, if my scheme does but succeed! I can't help laughing to think of it! Mum—here he comes.

Enter GRAVES.

GRAVES (*sighing*).

Ah, Lady Franklin!

LADY FRANKLIN (*sighing*).

Ah, Mr. Graves! (*They seat themselves.*) Pray excuse me for having kept you so long. Is it not a charming day?

GRAVES.

An east wind, ma'am! but nothing comes amiss to you!—it's a happy disposition! Poor Maria!—*she* too was naturally gay.

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

Yes, she was gay. So much life, and a great deal of spirit.

GRAVES.

Spirit? Yes!—nothing could master it. She *would* have her own way! Ah! there was nobody like her!

LADY FRANKLIN.

And then, when her spirit was up, she looked so handsome! Her eyes grew so brilliant!

GRAVES.

Did not they?—Ah! ah! ha! ha! ha! And do you remember her pretty trick of stamping her foot?—the tiniest little foot—I think I see her now. Ah! this conversation is very soothing.

LADY FRANKLIN.

How well she acted in your private theatricals!

GRAVES.

You remember her Mrs. Oakley in “The Jealous Wife?” Ha! ha! how good it was!—ha! ha!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Ha! ha! Yes, in the very first scene, when she came out with (*mimicking*) “Your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me!”

GRAVES.

No—no! that’s not it! more energy. (*Mimicking.*) “Your unkindness and barbarity will be the DEATH of me.” Ha! ha! I ought to know how she said it, for she used to practise it on me twice a-day. Ah! poor dear lamb! (*wipes his eyes.*)

LADY FRANKLIN.

And then she sang so well! was such a composer! What was that little French air she was so fond of?

GRAVES.

Ha! ha! sprightly! was it not? Let me see—let me see.

LADY FRANKLIN (*humming*).

Tum ti—ti tum—ti—ti—ti. No, that's not it.

GRAVES (*humming*).

Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum.

BOTH.

Tum ti—ti—tum ti—ti—tum—tum—tum. Ha! ha!

GRAVES (*throwing himself back*).

Ah! what recollections it revives! It is too affecting.

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

Now, if I could but get him to dance with me, we should end with being partners for life. It *is* affecting, but we are all mortal. (*Sighs.*) And at your Christmas party, at Cyprus Lodge, do you remember her dancing the Scotch reel with Captain Macnaughten.

GRAVES.

Ha! ha! ha! To be *sure*—to be *sure*.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Can you think of the step?—somehow thus, was it not? (*dancing.*)

GRAVES.

No—no—quite wrong!—just stand there. Now then (*humming the tune*)—La—la-la-la—La, la, &c.

[*They dance.*

That's it—excellent—admirable!

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

Now it's coming.

Enter SIR JOHN, BLOUNT, GEORGINA,—*they stand amazed.*

[LADY FRANKLIN *continues to dance.*

GRAVES.

Bewitching—irresistible! It's Maria herself that I see before me! Thus—thus—let me clasp—Oh, the devil! Just like my luck!—(*Stopping opposite SIR JOHN.*)

[LADY FRANKLIN *runs off.*

SIR JOHN.

Upon *my* word, Mr. Graves!

GEORGINA, BLOUNT.

Encore—encore! Bravo—bravo!

GRAVES.

It's all a mistake! I—I—Sir John. Lady Franklin, you see—that is to say—I.—Sainted Maria! you are spared, at least, this affliction!

GEORGINA.

Pray go on!

BLOUNT.

Don't let us interwupt you.

GRAVES.

Interrupt me! I must say that this rudeness—this gross impropriety—to pry into the sorrows of a poor

bereaved sufferer, seeking comfort from a sympathizing friend—But such is human nature !

GEORGINA.

But, Mr. Graves !—(*following him.*)

GRAVES.

Heartless !

BLOUNT.

My dear Mr. Graves !—(*following him.*)

GRAVES.

Frivolous !

SIR JOHN.

Stay and dine !—(*following him.*)

GRAVES.

Unfeeling !

OMNES.

Ha !—ha !—ha !

GRAVES.

Monsters ! Good day to you. *

[*Exit, followed by* SIR JOHN, &c.

* For the original idea of this scene the author is indebted to a little *proverbe*, never, he believes, acted in public.

SCENE VI.

*The interior of * * * 's Club ; night ; lights, &c. Small sofa-tables, with books, papers, tea, coffee, &c. Several members grouped by the fireplace ; one member with his legs over the back of his chair ; another with his legs over his table ; a third with his legs on the chimney-piece. To the left, and in front of the Stage, an old member reading the newspaper, seated by a small round table ; to the right a card-table, before which CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMOOTH is seated, and sipping lemonade ; at the bottom of the Stage another card-table.*

GLOSSMORE, STOUT.

GLOSSMORE.

You don't come often to the club, Stout ?

STOUT.

No ; time is money. An hour spent at a club is unproductive capital.

OLD MEMBER (*reading the newspaper*).

Waiter !—the snuff-box.

[Waiter *brings it*.

GLOSSMORE.

So, Evelyn has taken to play ? I see Deadly Smooth, "hushed in grim repose, awaits his evening prey."

Deep work to-night, I suspect, for Smooth is drinking lemonade—keeps his head clear—monstrous clever dog!

Enter EVELYN; salutes and shakes hands with different members in passing up the Stage.

EVELYN.

How d' ye do, Glossmore? How are you, Stout?—*you* don't play, I think! Political Economy never plays at cards, eh?—never has time for anything more frivolous than Rents and Profits, Wages and Labour, High Prices and Low—Corn-laws, Poor-laws, Tithes, Currency—Dot-and-go-one—Rates, Puzzles, Taxes, Riddles, and Botheration! Smooth is the man. Aha! Smooth. Piquet, eh? You owe me my revenge!

[Members touch each other significantly; Stout walks away with the snuff-box; Old Member looks at him savagely.]

SMOOTH.

My dear Alfred, anything to oblige.

[They seat themselves.]

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[Waiter takes it from Stout, and brings it back to Old Member.]

Enter BLOUNT.

BLOUNT.

So, so! Evelyn at it again,—eh, Glossmore?

GLOSSMORE.

Yes, Smooth sticks to him like a leech. Clever fellow, that Smooth!

BLOUNT,

Will you make up a wubber ?

GLOSSMORE.

Have you got two others ?

BLOUNT.

Yes; Flat and Green.

GLOSSMORE.

Bad players.

BLOUNT.

I make it a wule to play with bad players ; it is five per cent. in one's favour. I hate gambling. But a quiet wubber, if one is the best player out of four, can't do one any harm.

GLOSSMORE.

Clever fellow, that Blount !

[BLOUNT *takes up the snuff-box, and walks off with it* ; Old Member *looks at him savagely*.

[BLOUNT, GLOSSMORE, FLAT, and GREEN *make up a table at the bottom of the Stage*.

SMOOTH.

A thousand pardons, my dear Alfred,—ninety repique—ten cards !—game !

EVELYN (*passing a note to him*).

Game ! Before we go on, one question. This is Thursday—how much do you calculate to win of me before Tuesday next ?

SMOOTH.

Ce cher Alfred ! He is so droll !

EVELYN (*writing in his pocket-book*).

Forty games a-night—four nights, minus Sunday—our usual stakes—that would be right, I think !

SMOOTH (*glancing over the account*).

Quite—if I win all—which is next to impossible.

EVELYN.

It shall be possible to win twice as much, on one condition. Can you keep a secret ?

SMOOTH.

My dear Alfred, I have kept myself ! I never inherited a farthing—I never spent less than 4000*l.* a-year—and I never told a soul how I managed it.

EVELYN.

Hark ye, then—a word with you—(*they whisper*).

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter !—the snuff-box.

[*Waiter takes it from* BLOUNT, &c.

Enter SIR JOHN.

EVELYN.

You understand ?

SMOOTH.

Perfectly ; anything to oblige.

EVELYN (*cutting*).

It is for you to deal. [*They go on playing.*]

SIR JOHN (*groaning*).

There's my precious son-in-law, that is to be, spending *my* consequence, and making a fool of himself.

(*Takes up the snuff-box* ; Old Member looks at him savagely.

BLOUNT.

I'm out. Flat, a poney on the odd twick. That's wight.—(*Coming up, counting his money.*) Well, Sir John, you don't play ?

SIR JOHN.

Play ? no ! Confound him—lost again !

EVELYN.

Hang the cards !—double the stakes !

SMOOTH.

Just as you please—done !

SIR JOHN.

Done, indeed !

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter !—the snuff-box.

(*Waiter takes it from SIR JOHN.*

BLOUNT.

I've won eight points and the bets—I never lose—I never play in the Deadly Smooth set !

[*Takes up the snuff-box* ; Old Member as before.

SIR JOHN (*looking over SMOOTH's hand, and fidgeting backwards and forwards*).

Lord have mercy on us ! Smooth has seven for his point ! What 's the stakes ?

EVELYN.

Don't disturb us—I only throw out four. Stakes, Sir John ?—immense ! Was ever such luck ?—not a card for my point. Do stand back, Sir John—I'm getting irritable !

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter !—the snuff-box.

[*Waiter brings it back.*]

BLOUNT.

One hundred pounds on the next game, Evelyn ?

SIR JOHN.

Nonsense—nonsense—don't disturb him ! All the fishes come to the bait ! Sharks and minnows all nibbling away at my son-in-law !

EVELYN.

One hundred pounds, Blount ? Ah ! the finest gentleman is never too fine a gentleman to pick up a guinea. Done ! Treble the stakes, Smooth !

SIR JOHN.

I'm on the rack ! (*seizing the snuff-box.*) Be cool, Evelyn ! take care, my dear boy !—now don't ye—now don't !

EVELYN.

What—what? You have four queens!—five to the king. Confound the cards!—a fresh pack. (*Throws the cards behind him over SIR JOHN.*)

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

[*Different members gather round.*]

FIRST MEMBER.

I never before saw Evelyn out of temper. He must be losing immensely!

SECOND MEMBER.

Yes, this is interesting!

SIR JOHN.

Interesting! there's a wretch!

FIRST MEMBER.

Poor fellow! he'll be ruined in a month!

SIR JOHN.

I'm in a cold sweat.

SECOND MEMBER.

Smooth is the very devil.

SIR JOHN.

The devil's a joke to him!

GLOSSMORE (*slapping SIR JOHN on the back*).

A clever fellow, that Smooth, Sir John, eh? (*Takes up the snuff-box; Old Member as before*). 100*l.* on this game, Evelyn?

EVELYN (*half turning round*).

You! well done, the Constitution! yes, 100*l.*!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

STOUT.

I think I'll venture!—200*l.* on this game, Evelyn?

EVELYN (*quite turning round*).

Ha! ha! ha!—Enlightenment and the Constitution on the same side of the question at last! O, Stout, Stout!—great happiness of the greatest number—greatest number, number one! Done, Stout!—200*l.*!—ha! ha! ha!—I deal, Stout. Well done, Political Economy—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Quite hysterical—drivelling! Arn't you ashamed of yourselves? His own cousins!—all in a conspiracy—a perfect gang of them.

[*Members indignant.*

STOUT (*to Members*).

Hush! he's to marry Sir John's daughter.

FIRST MEMBER.

What, Stingy Jack's? oh!

CHORUS OF MEMBERS.

Oh! oh!

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter!—the snuff-box.

EVELYN (*rising in great agitation*).

No more, no more—I've done!—quite enough.
Glossmore, Stout, Blount,—I'll pay you to-morrow.
I—I—. Death!—this is ruinous!

[*Seizes the snuff-box ; Old Member as before.*]

SIR JOHN.

Ruinous? I dare say it is! What has he lost?
what *has* he lost, Smooth? Not much? eh? eh?

[*Omnes gather round SMOOTH.*]

SMOOTH.

Oh, a trifle, dear John!—excuse me! We never tell
our winnings.—(*To BLOUNT*) How d'yed do, Fred?—(*To*
GLOSSMORE) By the by, Charles, don't you want to
sell your house in Grosvenor-square?—12,000*l.*, eh?

GLOSSMORE.

Yes, and the furniture at a valuation. About 3000*l.*
more.

SMOOTH (*looking over his pocketbook*).

Um!—Well, we'll talk of it.

SIR JOHN.

12 and 3—15,000*l.* What a cold-blooded rascal it is!—15,000*l.*, Smooth?

SMOOTH.

Oh, the house itself is a trifle, but the establishment—I'm considering whether I have enough to keep it up, my dear John.

OLD MEMBER.

Waiter, the snuff-box! (*Scraping it round, and with a wry face*)—And it's all gone! (*Gives it to the Waiter to fill.*)

SIR JOHN (*turning round*).

And it's all gone!

EVELYN (*starting up and laughing hysterically*).

Ha! ha! all gone? not a bit of it. Smooth, this club is so noisy. Sir John, you are always in the way. Come to my house! come! Champagne and a broiled bone. Nothing venture, nothing have! The luck must turn, and by Jupiter we'll make a night of it!

SIR JOHN.

A night of it!!! For Heaven's sake, Evelyn! EVELYN!!—think what you are about!—think of Georgina's feelings!—think of your poor lost mother!—think of the babes unborn!—think of—

EVELYN.

I'll think of nothing! Zounds!—you don't know

H

what I have lost, man ; it's all your fault, distracting my attention ! Pshaw—pshaw ! Out of the way, do ! Come, Smooth. Ha ! ha ! a night of it, my boy—a night of it !
[*Exeunt SMOOTH and EVELYN.*]

SIR JOHN (*following*).

You must not, you shall not ! Evelyn, my dear Evelyn !—he's drunk—he's mad ! Will no one send for the police ?

MEMBERS.

Ha ! ha ! ha ! Poor old Stingy Jack !

OLD MEMBER (*rising for the first time, and in a great rage*).

Waiter, the snuff-box !

END OF ACT III.

A C T I V.

S C E N E I.

*The Anteroom in EVELYN'S house, as in Scene I.
Act II. TABOURET, MACFINCH, FRANTZ, and
other tradesmen.*

TABOURET (*half whispers*).

So, I hear that Mr. Evelyn is turned gamester! There are strange reports about to-day—I don't know what to make of it! We must look sharp, Mr. Macfinch, we poor tradesmen, and make hay while the sun shines.

MACFINCH.

I wuish those geeming-houses were aw at the deevil! —it's a sheam and a sin for gentlemen to gang and ruin themselves, when we honest tradesmen could do it for them with sae muckle advantage to the arts and coummerce o' the country!

[*Omnes shake their heads approvingly.*

Enter SMOOTH from the inner room, with a pocketbook and pencil in his hand.

SMOOTH (*looking round*).

Hum! ha! Fine pictures!—(*Feeling the curtains*)

The new-fashioned velvet, hem! good-proportioned rooms! Yes, this house is better than Glossmore's! Oh, Mr. Tabouret, the upholsterer! you furnished these rooms! All of the best? eh!

TABOURET.

Oh! the VERY best! Mr. Evelyn is not a man to grudge expense, Sir!

SMOOTH.

He is not indeed. You've been paid, I suppose, Tabouret?

TABOURET.

No, Sir, no—I never send in my bills when a customer is rich. (*Aside*) Bills are like trees, and grow by standing.

SMOOTH.

Humph! Not PAID? humph!

[*Omnes gather round.*]

MACFINCH.

I dinna like that hoomph, there's something varasuspeccious abun' it.

TABOURET (*to the tradesmen*).

It's the great card-player, Captain Smooth—finest player in Europe—cleaned out the Duke of Silly Val. Uncommonly clever man!

SMOOTH (*pacing about the room*).

Thirty-six feet by twenty-eight—Um! I think a

bow-window *there* would be an *improvement* : could it be done easily, Tabouret ?

MACFINCH.

If Mr. Evelyn wuishes to pool about his house, there's no mon like my friend Mr. MacStucco.

SMOOTH.

Evelyn ? I was speaking of *myself*. Mr. MacStucco ?—humph !

TABOURET.

Yourself ? Have you bought the house, sir ?

SMOOTH.

Bought it ?—hum !—ha !—it depends—So you 've not been paid yet ?—um ! Nor you—nor you—nor you ? Hum ? ah !

TABOURET.

No, sir !—what *then* ? No fear of Mr. EVELYN !
Ha ! ha !

OMNES (*anxiously*).

Ha ! ha !—what then ?

MACFINCH.

Ah, sir, what then ? I 'm a puir mon with a family ; this way, Captain ! You 've a leetle account in the buiks ; an' we 'll ee'n wipe it out altogether, an you 'll say what you mean by that Hoom ha !

SMOOTH.

Macfinch, my dear fellow, don't oblige me to cane you ; I would not have Mr. Evelyn distressed for the world. Poor fellow ! he holds very bad cards. So you 've not been paid yet ? Don't send in your bills on any account—Mind ! Yes ; I don't dislike the house with some alteration. Good day to you—Hum ! ha !

[Exit, looking about him, examining the chairs, tables, &c.]

TABOURET.

Plain as a pikestaff !—staked his very house on an odd trick !

SCENE II.

The foregoing.—Enter SHARP from the inner room, agitated and in a hurry.

SHARP.

O Lord ! O Lord !—who'd have thought it ? Cards are the devil's book ! John !—Thomas !—Harris !—*(ringing the bell.)*

Enter Two Servants.

Tom, take this letter to Sir John Vesey's. If not at home, find him—he will give you a cheque. Go to

his banker's and get it cashed *instantly*. Quick—quick off with you !

TABOURET (*seizing* Servant).

What's the matter ?—what's the matter ? How's Mr. Evelyn ?

SERVANT.

Bad—very bad ! Sate up all night with Captain Smooth !
[*Runs off*.]

SHARP (*to the other* Servant).

Yes, Harris, your poor master ! O dear ! O dear ! You will take this note to the Belgian minister, Portland-place. Passport for Ostend ! Have the travelling carriage ready at a moment's notice !

MACFINCH (*stopping* Servant).

Passport ! Harkye, my mon ; is he gaun to pit the saut seas between us and the siller ?

SERVANT.

Don't stop me—something wrong in the chest—change of air—late hours—and Captain Smooth !

[*Exit*.]

SHARP (*walking about*).

And if the bank should break !—if the bank is broke, and he can't draw out !—bound to Smooth !

TABOURET.

Bank !—what bank ?

SHARP.

Flash's bank ! Flash, brother-in-law to Captain Smooth ! What have *you* heard ?—eh ?—eh ?

TABOURET.

That there's an awful run on it !

SHARP.

I must be off. Go—go—you can't see Mr. Evelyn to-day !

TABOURET.

My account, Sir !

MACFINCH.

I've a muckle bairns and a sma' bill !

FRANTZ.

O Sare, de great gentlemen always tink first of de tailor !

SHARP.

Call again—call again at Christmas. The bank, the cards,—the cards, the bank ! O dear ! O dear !

[*Exit.*]

TABOURET.

The bank !

MACFINCH.

The passport !

FRANTZ.

And all dat vill be seen of de great Evelyn coat is de back of it. *Donner und hagel* !—I vil arrest him—I vil put de salt on de tail of it !

TABOURET (*aside*).

I'll slip down to the city and see how the bank goes!

MACFINCH (*aside*).

I'll een gang to my coosin the la'yer. Nothing but peetience for us, Mr. Tabouret.

TABOURET.

Ay, ay,—stick by each other—share and share alike—that's my way, Sir.

OMNES.

Share and share alike.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Enter Servant, GLOSSMORE, and BLOUNT.

SERVANT.

My master is not very well, my lord; but I'll let him know. [*Exit.*]

GLOSSMORE.

I'm verry curious to learn the result of his gambling tête-à-tête.

BLOUNT.

Oh, he's so howwidly wich, he can afford even a tête-à-tête with Deadly Smooth!

GLOSSMORE.

Poor old Stingy Jack : why, Georgina was *your* intended.

BLOUNT.

Yes ; and I really liked the girl, though out of pique I pwoposed to her cousin. But what can a man do against money ?

Enter EVELYN.

If we could start fair, you'd see whom Georgina would pwefer : but she's sacwificed by her father ! She as much as told me so !

EVELYN.

So, so, gentlemen, we've a little account to settle—one hundred each.

BOTH.

Don't talk of it.

EVELYN.

Well, I won't !—(*Taking* BLOUNT *aside*.) Ha ! ha ! you'd hardly believe it—but I'd rather not pay you just at present ; my money is locked up, and I must wait, you know, for the Groginhole rents. So ! instead of owing you one hundred pounds, suppose I owe you *five* ? You can give me a cheque for the other four. And, harkye ! not a word to Glossmore.

BLOUNT.

Glossmore ! the gwreatest gossip in London ! I shall be delighted !—(*Aside*) It never does harm to lend to a wick man ; one gets it back somehow. By the way,

Evelyn, if you want my gwey cab-horse, you may have him for two hundred pounds, and *that* will make seven!

EVELYN (*aside*).

That's the fashionable usury: your friend does not take interest—he sells you a horse.—(*Aloud.*) Blount, it's a bargain.

BLOUNT (*writing the cheque, and musingly*).

No; I don't see what harm it can do me; that off leg must end in a spavin.

EVELYN (*to GLOSSMORE*).

That hundred pounds I owe you is rather inconvenient at present; I've a large sum to make up for the Groginhole property—perhaps you would lend me four or five hundred more—just to go on with?

GLOSSMORE.

Certainly! Hopkins is dead: your interest for Cipher would—

EVELYN.

Why, I can't promise *that* at this moment. But as a slight mark of friendship and gratitude, I shall be very much flattered if you'll accept a splendid grey cab-horse I bought to-day—cost two hundred pounds!

GLOSSMORE.

Bought *to-day*!—then I'm safe. My dear fellow! you're always so princely!

EVELYN.

Nonsense! just write the cheque; and, harkye!—
not a syllable to Blount!

GLOSSMORE.

Blount? He's the town-crier! (*Goes to write.*)

BLOUNT (*giving EVELYN the cheque*).

Wansom's, Pall-mall.

EVELYN.

Thank you. So you *proposed* to Miss Douglas!

BLOUNT.

Hang it! yes; I could have sworn that she fancied me; her manner, for instance, that very day you *proposed* for Miss Vesey,—otherwise Georgina—

EVELYN.

Has only half what Miss Douglas has.

BLOUNT.

You forget how much Stingy Jack must have saved!
But I beg your pardon.

EVELYN.

Never mind; but not a word to Sir John, or he'll fancy I'm ruined.

GLOSSMORE (*giving the cheque*).

Ransom's, Pall-mall. Tell me, did you win or lose last night?

EVELYN.

Win! lose! oh! No more of that, if you love me. I must send off at once to the banker's (*looking at the two cheques*).

GLOSSMORE (*aside*).

Why! he's borrowed from Blount, too!

BLOUNT (*aside*).

That's a draft from Lord Glossmore!

EVELYN.

Excuse me; I must dress; I have not a moment to lose. You remember you dine with me to-day—seven o'clock. You'll meet Smooth. (*With tears in his voice.*) It may be the last time I shall ever welcome you here! My——what am I saying?—Oh, merely a joke!—good by—good by.

[*Shaking them heartily by the hand. Exit by the inner room.*]

BLOUNT.

Glossmore!

GLOSSMORE.

Blount!

BLOUNT.

I am afraid all's not wight!

GLOSSMORE.

I incline to your opinion!

BLOUNT.

But I've sold my gwey cab-horse.

GLOSSMORE.

Grey cab-horse! you! What is he really worth now?

BLOUNT.

Since he is sold, I will tell you—Not a sixpence!

GLOSSMORE.

Not a sixpence! he gave it to me!

[EVELYN at the door, giving directions to a
Servant in dumb show.

BLOUNT.

That was devilish unhandsome! Do you know, I feel nervous!

GLOSSMORE.

Nervous? Let us run and stop payment of our drafts.

[EVELYN shuts the door, and Servant runs
across the stage.

BLOUNT.

Hollo, John! where so fast?

SERVANT (*in great haste*).

Beg pardon, Sir Frederick, to Pall-mall—Messrs.
Ransom.

[Exit.

BLOUNT (*solemnly*).

Glossmore, we are floored !

GLOSSMORE.

Sir, the whole town shall know of it !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter TOKE and other Servants.

TOKE.

Come, come, stir yourselves ! we 've no time to lose. This room is to be got ready for the shawls. Mrs. Crump and the other ladies of our household are to wait here on the women before they go up to the drawing-room. Take away that desk : don't be lazy ! and give me the newspaper.

[*TOKE seats himself ; the Servants bustle about.*

Strange reports about my patron ! and the walley is gone for the passport !

Enter FRANTZ with a bundle.

FRANTZ.

Mr. Toke, my goot Mr. Toke, I 've brought you von leetel present.

TOKE.

John and Charles, vanish !

[*Exeunt Servants.*

I scorn to corrupt them 'ere working classes !

FRANTZ (*producing a pair of smallclothes, which*

TOKE *examines*), *you will be back.*

Your master is von beggar! He wants to run away; we are all in de same vat-you-call-it—de same leetel nasty boat, Mr. Toke! Just let my friend Mr. Clutch up through the area, and I vill arrest him dis very day.

TOKE.

I accept the abridgments; but you've forgotten to line the pockets!

FRANTZ.

Blesh my soul, so I have! (*giving a note.*)

TOKE.

The area gate shall be left undefended. Do it quietly; no *claw*, as the French say.

FRANTZ.

Goot Mr. Toke — to-morrow I vill line de oter pocket. [*Exit.*]

TOKE.

My patron does not give me satisfaction!

Enter Footman.

FOOTMAN.

What chandeliers are to be lighted, Mr. Toke?—it's getting late.

TOKE.

Don't disturb me—I'm rum-mynating!—yes, yes, there's no doubt of it! Charles, the area gate is open?

FOOTMAN.

And all the plate in the pantry ! I'll run and—

TOKE.

Not a step ! leave it open.

FOOTMAN.

But—

TOKE (*with dignity*).

It's for the sake of wentilation ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A splendid Saloon in EVELYN's house.

EVELYN, GRAVES.

GRAVES.

You've withdrawn your money from Flash and Brisk ?

EVELYN.

No.

GRAVES.

No !—then—

Enter SIR JOHN, LADY FRANKLIN, *and* GEORGINA.

SIR JOHN.

You got the cheque for 500*l.* safely ?—too happy to—

EVELYN (*interrupting him*).

My best thanks!—my warmest gratitude! So kind in you! so seasonable!—that 500*l.*—you don't know the value of that 500*l.* I shall never forget your nobleness of conduct.

SIR JOHN.

Gratitude! Nobleness!—(*Aside*.) I can't have been taken in?

EVELYN.

And in a moment of such distress!

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Such distress! He picks out the ugliest words in the whole dictionary!

EVELYN.

I've done with Smooth. But I'm still a little crippled, and you must do me *another* favour. I've only as yet paid the deposit of ten per cent. for the great Groginhole property. I am to pay the rest this week—nay, I fear, to-morrow. I've already sold out of the Funds; the money lies at the bankers', and of course I can't touch it; for if I don't pay by a certain day, I forfeit the estate and the deposit.

SIR JOHN.

What's coming now, I wonder?

EVELYN.

Georgina's fortune is 10,000*l.* I always meant, my dear Sir John, to present you with that little sum.

SIR JOHN.

Oh, Evelyn ! your generosity is positively touching !
(*wipes his eyes.*)

EVELYN.

But the news of my losses has frightened my tradesmen ! I have so many heavy debts at this moment that—that—that——. But I see Georgina is listening, and I'll say what I have to say to her.

SIR JOHN.

No, no—no no. Girls don't understand business !

EVELYN.

The very reason I speak to her. This is an affair, not of business, but of *feeling*. Stout, show Sir John my Correggio.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

Devil take his Correggio ! The man is born to torment me !

EVELYN.

My dear Georgina, whatever you may hear said of me, I flatter myself that you feel confidence in my honour.

GEORGINA.

Can you doubt it ?

EVELYN.

I confess that I am embarrassed at this moment ; I have been weak enough to lose money at play, and there

are other demands on me. I promised you never to gamble again as long as I live. My affairs can be retrieved, but for the first few years of our marriage it may be necessary to retrench.

GEORGINA.

Retrench!

EVELYN.

To live perhaps altogether in the country.

GEORGINA.

Altogether in the country!

EVELYN.

To confine ourselves to a modest competence.

GEORGINA.

Modest competence! I knew something horrid was coming!

EVELYN.

And now, Georgina, you may have it in your power at this moment to save me from much anxiety and humiliation. My money is locked up—my debts of honour must be settled—you are of age—your 10,000*l.* in your own hands——

SIR JOHN (*Stout listening as well as Sir John*).

I'm standing on hot iron!

EVELYN.

If you could lend it to me for a few weeks——You hesitate! oh! believe the honour of the man you

will call your husband before all the calumnies of the fools whom we call the world ! Can you give me this proof of your confidence ? Remember, without confidence, what is wedlock ?

SIR JOHN (*aside to her*).

No !—(*Aloud, pointing his glass at the Correggio*)
Yes, the picture may be fine.

STOUT.

But you don't like the subject ?

GEORGINA (*aside*).

He may be only trying me ! Best leave it to papa.

EVELYN.

Well——

GEORGINA.

You—you shall hear from me to-morrow.—(*Aside.*)
Ah, there's that dear Sir Frederick !

[*Goes to* BLOUNT.

Enter GLOSSMORE and SMOOTH; *Evelyn salutes them, paying SMOOTH servile respect.*

LADY FRANKLIN (*to* GRAVES).

Ha ! ha ! To be so disturbed yesterday,—was it not droll ?

GRAVES.

Never recur to that humiliating topic !

GLOSSMORE (*to STOUT*).

See how Evelyn fawns upon Smooth!

STOUT.

How mean in him! *Smooth*—a professional gambler—a fellow who lives by his wits! I would not know such a man on any account!

SMOOTH (*to GLOSSMORE*).

So Hopkins is dead—you want Cipher to come in for Groginhole, eh?

GLOSSMORE.

What!—could *you* manage it?

SMOOTH.

Ce cher Charles!—anything to oblige!

STOUT.

Groginhole! What can he have to do with Groginhole? Glossmore, present me to Smooth.

GLOSSMORE.

What! the gambler—the fellow who lives by his wits?

STOUT.

Why, his wits seem to be an uncommonly productive capital! I'll introduce myself. How d'ye do, Captain Smooth? We have met at the club, I think,—I am charmed to make your acquaintance in private. I say, Sir, what do you think of the affairs of the nation? Bad! very bad!—no enlightenment!—great fall off in

the revenue!—no knowledge of finance! There's only one man who can save the country—and that's POPKINS!

SMOOTH.

Is he in parliament, Mr. Stout? What's your Christian name, by the by?

STOUT.

Benjamin.—No; constituencies are so ignorant, they don't understand his value. He's no orator: in fact, he stammers so much—but devilish profound. Could not we ensure him for Groginhole?

SMOOTH.

My dear Benjamin, it's a thing to be thought on.

EVELYN (*advancing*).

My friends—pray be seated;—I wish to consult you. This day twelvemonths I succeeded to an immense income, and as, by a happy coincidence, on the same day I secured your esteem, so now I wish to ask you if you think I could have spent that income in a way more worthy your good opinion.

GLOSSMORE.

Impossible! excellent taste—beautiful house!

BLOUNT.

Vewy good horses—(*aside to GLOSSMORE*) especially the gwey cab!

LADY FRANKLIN.

Splendid pictures!

GRAVES.

And a magnificent cook, ma'am!

SMOOTH (*thrusting his hands in his pockets*).

It's my opinion, Alfred—and I'm a judge—that you could not have spent your money better!

OMNES (*except SIR JOHN*).

Very true!

SMOOTH

EVELYN

What say you, Sir John? You may think me a little extravagant; but you know that in this world the only way to show oneself thoroughly respectable is to make a thoroughly respectable show.

SIR JOHN.

Certainly—certainly!—No, you could not have done better.—(*Aside*) I don't know what to make of it.

GEORGINA.

Certainly.—(*Coaxingly*.) Don't retrench, my dear Alfred!

GLOSSMORE.

Retrench! nothing so plebeian!

STOUT.

Plebeian, sir!—worse than plebeian!—it is against all the rules of public morality. Every one knows, now-a-days, that extravagance is a benefit to the population—encourages art—employs labour—and multiplies spinning-jennies.

EVELYN.

You reassure me!—I own I did think that a man worthy of friends so sincere might have done something better than feast—dress—drink—play—

GLOSSMORE.

Nonsense!—we like you the better for it.—(*Aside.*)
I wish I had my 600% back, though.

EVELYN.

And you are as much my friends now as when you offered me 10% for my old nurse.

SIR JOHN.

A thousand times more so, my dear boy!

[*Omnes approve.*]

Enter SHARP:

SMOOTH.

But who's our new friend?

EVELYN.

Who! the very man who first announced to me the wealth which you allow I have spent so well. But what's the matter, Sharp?

SHARP (*whispering* EVELYN).EVELYN (*aloud*).

The bank's broke!

SIR JOHN.

Broke!—what bank?

EVELYN.

Flash, Brisk, and Co.

GLOSSMORE (*to SMOOTH*).

And Flash was your brother-in-law. I'm very sorry.

SMOOTH (*taking snuff*).

Not at all, Charles,—I did not bank there.

SIR JOHN.

But I warned you—you withdrew?

EVELYN.

Alas! no!

SIR JOHN.

Oh!—Not much in their hands?

EVELYN.

Why, I told you the purchase-money for Groginhole was at my bankers'——But no, no: don't look so frightened! It was not placed with Flash—it is at Hoare's—it is, indeed. Nay, I assure you it is! A mere trifle at Flash's—upon my word, now! To-morrow, Sharp, we'll talk of this! One day more—one day, at least, for enjoyment!

SIR JOHN.

Oh! a pretty enjoyment!

BLOUNT.

And he borrowed 700*l.* of me!

GLOSSMORE.

And 600*l.* of me!

SIR JOHN.

And 500*l.* of me!

STOUT.

Oh! a regular Jeremy Diddler!

SMOOTH (*to* SIR JOHN).

John, do you know, I think I would take a handsome offer for this house just as it stands—furniture, plate, pictures, books, bronzes, and statues!

SIR JOHN.

Powers above!

STOUT (*to* SIR JOHN).

I say, you have placed your daughter in a very unsafe investment. What then?—a daughter's like any other capital—transfer the stock in hand to t' other speculation.

SIR JOHN (*going to* GEORGINA).

Ha! I'm afraid we've been very rude to Sir Frederick. A monstrous fine young man!

Enter TOKE.TOKE (*to* EVELYN).

Sir, I beg your pardon, but Mr. Macfinch insists on my giving you this letter instantly.

EVELYN (*reading*).

How! Sir John, this fellow, Macfinch, has heard of my misfortunes, and insists on being paid;—a lawyer's letter—quite insolent!

TOKE.

And, Sir, Mr. Tabouret is below, and declares he won't stir till he's paid.

EVELYN.

Won't stir till he's paid! What's to be done, Sir John?—Smooth, what is to be done?

SMOOTH.

If he won't stir till he's paid, make him up a bed, and I'll take him in the inventory as one of the fixtures, Alfred!

EVELYN.

It is very well for you to joke, Mr. Smooth. But—

Enter Sheriff's Officer, giving a paper to EVELYN, and whispering.

EVELYN.

What's this? Frantz, the tailor. Why, you impudent scoundrel! Faith! this is more than I bargained for—Sir John, I'm arrested.

SMOOTH (slapping SIR JOHN on the back with glee).

He's arrested, old gentleman! But I didn't lend him a farthing.

EVELYN.

And for a mere song—150%! Sir John, pay this fellow, will you? or bail me, or something,—while we go to dinner!

SIR JOHN.

Pay—bail—I'll be d——d if I do!—Oh, my 500%.! my 500%.! Mr. Alfred Evelyn, I want my 500%.!

GRAVES.

I'm going to do a very silly thing—I shall lose both my friend and my money;—just like my luck!—Evelyn, go to dinner—I'll settle this for you.

LADY FRANKLIN.

I love you for that!

GRAVES.

Do you? then I am the happiest—Ah! ma'am, I don't know what I am saying!

[*Exeunt GRAVES and Officer.*]

EVELYN (to GEORGINA).

Don't go by these appearances! I repeat, 10,000%. will more than cover all my embarrassments. I shall hear from you to-morrow?

GEORGINA.

Yes—yes

EVELYN.

But you're not going?—You, too, Glossmore?—you, Blount?—you, Stout?—you, Smooth?

SMOOTH.

No; I'll stick by you—as long as you've a guinea to stake!

GLOSSMORE.

Oh, this might have been expected from a man of such ambiguous political opinions!

STOUT.

Don't stop me, Sir. No man of common enlightenment would have squandered his substance in this way. Pictures and statues!—baugh!

EVELYN.

Why, you all said I could not spend my money better! Ha! ha! ha!—the absurdest mistake!—you don't fancy I'm going to prison?—Ha! ha!—Why don't you laugh, Sir John?—Ha! ha! ha!

SIR JOHN.

Sir, this horrible levity!—Take Sir Frederick's arm, my poor injured, innocent child!—Mr. Evelyn, after this extraordinary scene, you can't be surprised that I—I—Zounds! I'm suffocating!

SMOOTH.

But, my dear John, they've no right to arrest the dinner!

STOUT (*aside*).

But the election at Groginhole is to-morrow. This news may not arrive before the poll closes!—(*rushing to EVELYN*) Sir, Popkins never bribes: but Popkins will bet you 1000*l.* that he don't come in for Groginhole.

GLOSSMORE.

This is infamous, Mr. Stout! Cipher is a man who scorns every subterfuge!—(*aside to EVELYN*) But, for the sake of the Constitution, name your price.

EVELYN.

I know the services of Cipher—I know the profundity of Popkins: but it's too late—the borough's engaged!

TOKE.

Dinner is served.

GLOSSMORE (*pausing*).

Dinner!

STOUT.

Dinner!—it's a very good smell!

EVELYN (*to SIR JOHN*).

Turtle and venison too!

[*They stop irresolute.*

EVELYN.

That's right—come along. But, I say, Blount—Stout—Glossmore—Sir John—one word first: will you lend me 10*l.* for my old nurse?

[*Exeunt omnes, indignantly.*

SMOOTH *and* EVELYN.

Ha! ha! ha!

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

S C E N E I.

*****'s *Club*; SMOOTH, GLOSSMORE—*other Members.*

GLOSSMORE.

Will his horses be sold, think you?

SMOOTH,

Very possibly, Charles!—a fine stud—hum! ha!
Waiter, a glass of sherry!

GLOSSMORE.

They say he must go abroad!

SMOOTH.

Well! it's the best time of year for travelling,
Charles.

GLOSSMORE.

We are all to be paid to-day; and that looks suspicious!

SMOOTH.

Very suspicious, Charles! Hum!—ah!

GLOSSMORE.

My dear fellow, you must know the rights of the

matter: I wish you'd speak out. What have you really won? Is the house itself gone?

SMOOTH.

The house itself is certainly not gone, Charles, for I saw it exactly in the same place this morning at half past ten—it has not moved an inch!

[*Waiter gives a letter to GLOSSMORE.*]

GLOSSMORE (*reading*).

From Groginhole—an express! What's this? I'm amazed!!! (*Reading.*) "They've actually at the eleventh hour started Mr. Evelyn; and nobody knows what his politics are! We shall be *beat*!—the constitution is gone!—Cipher!" Oh! this is infamous in Evelyn! Gets into parliament just to keep himself out of the Bench.

SMOOTH.

He's capable of it!

GLOSSMORE.

Not a doubt of it, Sir!—not a doubt of it!

Enter SIR JOHN and BLOUNT, talking.

SIR JOHN.

My dear boy, I'm not flint! I am but a man! if Georgina really loves you—and I am sure that she *does*—I will never think of sacrificing her happiness to ambition—she is yours; I told her so this very morning.

BLOUNT.

The old humbug !

SIR JOHN.

She's the best of daughters !—the most obedient artless creature ! Oh ! she's been properly brought up : a good daughter makes a good wife. Dine with me at seven, and we'll talk of the settlements.

BLOUNT.

Yes ; I don't care for fortune ; but—

SIR JOHN.

Her 10,000*l.* will be settled on herself—that of course.

BLOUNT.

All of it, Sir ? Weally I—

SIR JOHN.

What *then*, my dear boy ? I shall leave you both all I've laid by. Ah ! you know I'm a close fellow ! “Stingy Jack”—eh ? After all, worth makes the man !

SMOOTH.

And the more a man's worth, John, the worthier man he must be !

[*Exit.*]BLOUNT (*aside*).

Yes ; he has no other child ! She *must* have all his savings ; I don't see what harm it could do me. Still that 10,000*l.*—I want that 10,000*l.* : if she would but run off now, one could get rid of the settlements.

Enter STOUT (wiping his forehead), and takes SIR JOHN aside.

STOUT.

Sir John, we've been played upon! My secretary is brother to Flash's head clerk; Evelyn had not 300*l.* in the bank!

SIR JOHN.

Bless us and save us! you take away my breath! But then—Deadly Smooth—the arrest—the—oh, he must be done up!

STOUT.

As to Smooch, he'd "do anything to oblige." All a trick, depend on it! Smooth has already deceived me, for before the day's over Evelyn will be member for Groginhole. I've had an express from Popkins; he's in despair! not for *himself*—but for the *country*, Sir John—what's to become of the country?

SIR JOHN.

But what could be Evelyn's *object*?

STOUT.

Object? Do you look for an object in a whimsical creature like that? A man who has not even any political opinions! Object! Perhaps to break off his match with your daughter! Take care, Sir John, or the borough will be lost to your family!

SIR JOHN.

Aha! I begin to smell a rat! But it's not too late yet.

STOUT.

My interest in Popkins made me run to Lord Spendquick, the late proprietor of Groginhole. I told him that Evelyn could not pay the rest of the money; and he told me that—

SIR JOHN.

What?

STOUT.

Mr. Sharp had just paid it him; there's no hope for Popkins! England will rue this day!

SIR JOHN.

Georgina shall lend him the money! I'll lend him—every man in my house shall lend him—I feel again what it is to be a father-in-law! But stop; I'll be cautious. Stout may be on his side—a trap—not likely; but I'll go first to Spendquick myself. Sir Frederick, excuse me—you can't dine with me to-day. And, on second thoughts, I see that it would be very unhandsome to desert poor Evelyn now he's down in the world. Can't think of it, my dear boy—can't think of it. Very much honoured, and happy to see you as a friend. Waiter! my carriage! Um! What, humbug *Stingy Jack*, will they? Ah! a good joke, indeed! [*Exit.*

BLOUNT.

Mr. Stout, what have you been saying to Sir John? Something against my character; I know you have; don't deny it. Sir, I shall expect satisfaction!

STOUT.

Satisfaction, Sir Frederick? as if a man of enlightenment had any satisfaction in fighting! Did not mention your name; we were talking of Evelyn. Only think!—he's no more ruined than you are.

BLOUNT.

Not ruined? Aha, now I understand!—So, so! Stay, let me see—she's to meet me in the square! (*pulls out his watch; a very small one.*)

STOUT (*pulling out his own; a very large one*).

I must be off to the vestry.

BLOUNT.

Just in time!—ten thousand pounds! Gad, my blood's up, and I won't be tweeked in *this* way, if he were fifty times Stingy Jack! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The drawing-rooms in SIR JOHN VESEY'S house.

LADY FRANKLIN, GRAVES.

GRAVES.

Well, well, I am certain that poor Evelyn loves Clara still: but you can't persuade me that she cares for him.

LADY FRANKLIN.

She has been breaking her heart ever since she heard of his distress. Nay, I am sure she would give all she has could it save him from the consequences of his own folly.

GRAVES (*half aside*).

She would only give him his own money, if she did. I should like just to sound her.

LADY FRANKLIN (*ringing the bell*).

And you shall. I take so much interest in her that I forgive your friend everything but his offer to Georgina.

Enter Servant.

Where are the young ladies?

SERVANT.

Miss Vesey is, I believe, still in the square: Miss Douglas is just come in, my lady.

LADY FRANKLIN.

What, did not she go out with Miss Vesey?

SERVANT.

No, my lady; I attended her to Drummond's, the banker. [Exit.]

LADY FRANKLIN.

Drummond's!

Enter CLARA.

Why, child, what on earth could take you to Drummond's at this hour of the day?

CLARA (*confused*).

Oh, I—that is—I—Ah, Mr. Graves! How is

Mr. Evelyn ? How does he bear up against so sudden a reverse ?

GRAVES.

With an awful calm. I fear all is not right here ! (*touching his head.*)—The report in the town is, that he must go abroad instantly—perhaps to-day !

CLARA.

Abroad !—to-day !

GRAVES.

But all his creditors will be paid ; and he only seems anxious to know if Miss Vesey remains true in his misfortunes.

CLARA.

Ah ! he loves her so *much*, then !

GRAVES.

Um !—That 's more than I can say.

CLARA.

She told me, last night, that he said to the last that 10,000*l.* would free him from all his liabilities—that was the sum, was it not ?

GRAVES.

Yes ; he persists in the same assertion. Will Miss Vesey lend it ?

LADY FRANKLIN (*aside*).

If she does I shall not think so well of her poor dear mother ; for I am sure she 'd be no child of Sir John's !

GRAVES.

I should like to convince myself that my poor friend has nothing to hope from a woman's generosity.

LADY FRANKLIN.

Civil! And are men, then, less covetous?

GRAVES.

I know one man, at least, who, rejected in his poverty by one as poor as himself, no sooner came into a sudden fortune than he made his lawyer invent a codicil which the testator never dreamt of, bequeathing independence to the woman who had scorned him.

LADY FRANKLIN.

And never told her?

GRAVES.

Never! There's no such document at Doctors' Commons, depend on it! You seem incredulous, Miss Clara! Good day!

CLARA (*following him*).

One word, for mercy's sake! Do I understand you right? Ah, how could I be so blind! Generous Evelyn!

GRAVES.

You appreciate, and *Georgina* will desert him. Miss Douglas, he loves you still.—If that's not just like me! Meddling with other people's affairs, as if they were worth it—hang them! [Exit.

CLARA.

Georgina will desert him. Do you think so?—
(*Aside.*) Ah, he will soon discover that she never wrote that letter!

LADY FRANKLIN.

She told me, last night, that she would never see him again. To do her justice, she's less interested than her father,—and as much attached as she can be to another. Even while engaged to Evelyn she has met Sir Frederick every day in the square.

CLARA.

And he is alone—sad—forsaken—ruined. And I, whom he enriched—I, the creature of his bounty—I, once the woman of his love—I stand idly here to content myself with tears and prayers! Oh, Lady Franklin, have pity on me—on him! We are both of kin to him—as relations we have both a right to comfort! Let us go to him—come!

LADY FRANKLIN.

No! it would scarcely be right—remember the world—I cannot.

CLARA.

All abandon him—then I will go alone!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You!—so proud—so sensitive!

CLARA.

Pride—when he wants a friend?

LADY FRANKLIN.

His misfortunes are his own fault—a gambler!

CLARA.

Can you think of his faults now? *I* have no right to do so. All I have—all—his gift!—and I never to have dreamt it!

LADY FRANKLIN.

But if Georgina do indeed release him—if she has already done so—what will he think? What but—

CLARA.

What but—that, if he love me still, I may have enough for both, and I am by his side! But that is too bright a dream. He told me I might call him brother! Where, now, should a sister be?—But—but—I—I—I tremble! If, after all—if—if—In one word—Am I too bold? The world—my conscience can answer *that*—but do you think that **HE** could despise me?

LADY FRANKLIN.

No, Clara, no! Your fair soul is too transparent for even libertines to misconstrue. Something tells me that this meeting may make the happiness of both! You cannot go alone. My presence justifies all. Give me your hand—we will go together!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

A room in EVELYN's house.

EVELYN.

Yes ; as yet, all surpasses my expectations. I am sure of Smooth—I have managed even Sharp ; my election will seem but an escape from a prison. Ha ! ha ! True, it cannot last long ; but a few hours more are all I require, and for that time at least I shall hope to be thoroughly ruined.

Enter GRAVES.

Well, Graves, and what do people say of me ?

GRAVES.

Everything that's bad !

EVELYN.

Three days ago I was universally respected. I awake this morning to find myself singularly infamous. Yet I'm the same man.

GRAVES.

Humph ! why gambling——

EVELYN.

Cant ! it was not criminal to gamble—it was criminal to lose. Tut !—will you deny that, if I had ruined Smooth instead of myself, every hand would have grasped mine yet more cordially, and every lip would

have smiled congratulation on my success? Man—Man! I've not been rich and poor for nothing! The Vices and the Virtues are written in a language the World cannot construe; it reads them in a vile translation, and the translators are—FAILURE and SUCCESS! You alone are unchanged.

GRAVES.

There's no merit in that. I am always ready to mingle my tears with any man. (*Aside*) I know I'm a fool, but I can't help it. Hark ye, Evelyn! I like you—I'm rich; and anything I can do to get you out of your hobble will give me an excuse to grumble for the rest of my life. There, now it's out.

EVELYN (*touched*).

There's something good in human nature after all! My dear friend, did I want your aid I would accept it, but I can extricate myself yet. Do you think Georgina will give me the same proof of confidence and affection?

GRAVES.

Would you break your heart if she did not?

EVELYN.

It is in vain to deny that I still love Clara; our last conversation renewed feelings which would task all the energies of my soul to conquer. What then? I am not one of those, the Sybarites of sentiment, who deem it impossible for humanity to conquer love—who call their own weakness the voice of a resistless destiny.

Such is the poor excuse of every woman who yields her honour, of every adulterer who betrays his friend. No! the heart was given to the soul as its ally, not as its traitor.

GRAVES.

What do you tend to?

EVELYN.

This:—If Georgina still adheres to my fortunes (and I will not put her to too harsh a trial), if she can face the prospect, not of ruin and poverty, for reports wrong me there, but of a moderate independence; if, in one word, she love me for myself, I will shut Clara for ever from my thought. I am pledged to Georgina, and I will carry to the altar a soul resolute to deserve her affection and fulfil its vows.

GRAVES.

And if she reject you?

EVELYN (*joyfully*).

If she do I am free once more! And then—then I will dare to ask, for I can ask without dishonour, if Clara can explain the past and bless the future!

Enter Servant with a letter.

EVELYN (*after reading it*).

The die is cast—the dream is over! Generous girl. Oh, Georgina! I will deserve you yet.

GRAVES.

Georgina, is it possible?

EVELYN.

And the delicacy, the womanhood, the exquisite grace of this ! How we misjudge the depth of the human heart ! How, seeing the straws on the surface, we forget that the pearls may lie hid below !* I imagined her incapable of this devotion.

GRAVES.

And *I too !*

EVELYN.

It were base in me to continue this trial a moment longer : I will write at once to undeceive that generous heart (*writing*).

GRAVES.

I would have given 1000*l.* if that little jade Clara had been beforehand : but just like my luck ! if I want a man to marry one woman, he's sure to marry another on purpose to vex me ! [EVELYN *rings the bell*.

Enter Servant.

EVELYN.

Take this instantly to Miss Vesey ; say I will call in an hour. (*Exit* Servant.) And now Clara is resigned for ever ! Why does my heart sink within me ? Why, why, looking to the fate to come, do I see only the memory of what has been ?

GRAVES.

You are re-engaged then to Georgina !

EVELYN.

Irrevocably.

* "Errors, like straws," &c.

SCENE IV.

Enter Servant, *announcing* LADY FRANKLIN and
MISS DOUGLAS.—EVELYN, GRAVES.

LADY FRANKLIN.

My dear Evelyn, you may think it strange to receive such visitors at this moment ; but, indeed, it is no time for ceremony. We are your relations—it is reported you are about to leave the country—we come to ask frankly what we can do to serve you ?

EVELYN.

Madam—I——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Come, come—do not hesitate to confide in us ; Clara is less a stranger to you than I am : your friend here will perhaps let me consult with him.—(*Aside to GRAVES.*) Let us leave them to themselves.

GRAVES.

You're an angel of a widow ; but you come too late, as whatever is good for anything generally does.

[*They retire into the inner room, which should be partially open.*]

EVELYN.

Miss Douglas, I may well want words to thank you ; this goodness—this sympathy—

CLARA (*abandoning herself to her emotion*).

Evelyn ! Evelyn ! Do not talk thus !—Goodness ! sympathy !—I have learned *all—all* ! It is for ME to

speak of *gratitude* ! What ! even when I had so wounded you—when you believed me mercenary and cold—when you thought that I was blind and base enough not to know you for what you are ;—even *at that time* you thought but of my happiness—my fortunes—my fate !—And to you—you—I owe all that has raised the poor orphan from servitude and dependence ! While your words were so bitter, your deeds so gentle ! Oh, noble Evelyn, this, then, was your revenge !

EVELYN.

You owe me no thanks ; that revenge was sweet ! Think you it was nothing to feel that my presence haunted you, though you knew it not ?—that in things, the pettiest as the greatest, which that gold could buy—the very jewels you wore—the very robe in which, to other eyes, you might seem more fair—in all in which you took the woman’s young and innocent delight—I had a part—a share ? that even if separated for ever—even if another’s—even in distant years—perhaps in a happy home, listening to sweet voices, that might call you “ mother ! ”—even then should the uses of that dross bring to your lips one smile—that smile was mine—due to me—due, as a sacred debt, to the hand that you rejected—to the love that you despised !

CLARA.

Despised ! See the proof that I despised you !—see : in this hour, when they say you are again as poor as before, I forget the world—my pride—perhaps too

much my sex : I remember but your sorrow—I am here !

EVELYN (*aside*).

O, Heaven ! give me strength to bear it !—(*Aloud.*) And is this the same voice that, when I knelt at your feet—when I asked but *one day* the hope to call you mine—spoke only of poverty, and answered, “ *Never ?* ”

CLARA.

Because I had been unworthy of your love if I had ensured your misery. Evelyn, hear me ! My father, like you, was poor—generous ; gifted, like you, with genius—ambition ; sensitive, like you, to the least breath of insult. He married, as you would have done—married one whose only dower was penury and care ! Alfred, I saw that genius the curse to itself !—I saw that ambition wither to despair !—I saw the struggle—the humiliation—the proud man’s agony—the bitter life—the early death !—and heard over his breathless clay my mother’s groan of self-reproach ! Alfred Evelyn, now speak ! Was the woman you loved so nobly to repay you with such a doom ?

EVELYN.

Clara, we should have shared it !

CLARA.

Shared ? Never let the woman who really loves comfort her selfishness with such delusion ! In marriages like this the wife cannot share the burden ; it is he—the husband—to provide, to scheme, to work, to

endure—to grind out his strong heart at the miserable wheel! The wife, alas, cannot share the struggle—she can but witness the despair! And, therefore, Alfred, I rejected you.

EVELYN.

Yet you believe me as poor now as I was then.

CLARA.

But *I* am not poor; *we* are not so poor! Of this fortune, which is all your own—if, as I hear, one-half would free you from your debts, why, *we have the other half still left*, Evelyn! It is humble—but it is not penury.

EVELYN.

Cease, cease—you know not how you torture me. Oh, that when hope was possible!—oh, that you had bid me take it to my breast and wait for a brighter day!

CLARA.

And so have consumed your life of life upon a hope perhaps delayed till age—shut you from a happier choice, from fairer fortunes—shackled you with vows that, as my youth and its poor attributes decayed, would only have irritated and galled—made your whole existence one long suspense! No, Alfred, even *yet* you do not know me!

EVELYN.

Know you! Fair angel, too excellent for man's harder nature to understand!—at least it is permitted me to revere. Why were such blessed words not vouch-

safed to me before?—why, why come they now—too late? Oh, Heaven—too late!

CLARA.

Too late! What, then, have I said?

EVELYN.

Wealth! what is it without you? *With* you, I recognise its power; to forestall your every wish—to smooth your every path—to make all that life borrows from Grace and Beauty your ministrant and handmaid; and then, looking to those eyes, to read there the treasures of a heart that excelled all that kings could lavish;—why *that* were to make gold indeed a god! But vain—vain—vain! Bound by every tie of faith, gratitude, loyalty, and honour, to another!

CLARA.

Another! Is she, then, true to your reverses? I did not know this—indeed, I did not! And I have thus betrayed myself! O, shame! he must despise me now!

SCENE V.

The foregoing.—Enter SIR JOHN; at the same time GRAVES and LADY FRANKLIN advance from the inner room.

SIR JOHN (*with dignity and frankness*).

Evelyn, I was hasty yesterday. You must own it natural that I should be so. But Georgina has been so urgent in your defence, that——(*as LADY FRANKLIN comes up to listen*) Sister, just shut the door, will you?

—that I cannot resist her. What's money without happiness? So give me your security; for she insists on lending you the 10,000%.

EVELYN.

I know; and have already received it.

SIR JOHN.

Already received it! Is he joking? Faith, for the last two days I believe I have been living amongst the Mysteries of Udolpho! Sister, have you seen Georgina?

LADY FRANKLIN.

Not since she went out to walk in the square.

SIR JOHN (*aside*).

She's not in the square nor the house—where the deuce can the girl be?

EVELYN.

I have written to Miss Vesey—I have asked her to fix the day for our wedding.

SIR JOHN (*joyfully*).

Have you? Go, Lady Franklin, find her instantly—she must be back by this time: take my carriage, it is but a step—you won't be two minutes gone.—(*Aside*) I'd go myself, but I'm afraid of leaving him a moment while he's in such excellent dispositions.

LADY FRANKLIN (*repulsing CLARA*).

No, no: stay till I return.

[*Exit.*]

SIR JOHN.

And don't be downhearted, my dear fellow ; if the worst come to the worst, you will have everything I can leave you. Meantime, if I can in any way help you—

EVELYN.

Ha !—you !—*you*, too ? Sir John, you have seen my letter to Miss Vesey ? (*aside*) or could she have learned the truth before she ventured to be generous ?

SIR JOHN.

No ; on my honour. I only just called at the door on my way from Lord Spend—— that is, from the City. Georgina was out ;— was ever anything so unlucky ?—(*Without*) [Hurrah—hurrah ! Blue for ever !]—What 's that ?

Enter SHARP.

SHARP.

Sir, a Deputation from Groginhole—poll closed in the first hour—you are returned ! Hollow, Sir—hollow !

EVELYN.

And it was to please Clara !

SIR JOHN.

Mr. Sharp,—Mr. Sharp,—I say, how much has Mr. Evelyn lost by Messrs. Flash and Co.

SHARP.

Oh, a great deal, Sir,—a great deal.

SIR JOHN (*alarmed*).

How !—a great deal !

EVELYN.

Speak the truth, Sharp,—concealment is all over.

SHARP.

223*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.*—a great sum to throw away.

GRAVES.

Ah, I comprehend now ! Poor Evelyn, caught in his own trap !

SIR JOHN.

Eh ! what, my dear boy ?—what ? Ha ! ha ! all humbug, was it ?—all humbug, upon my soul ! So, Mr. Sharp, isn't he ruined after all ?—not the least, wee, rascally, little bit in the world, ruined ?

SHARP.

Sir, he has never even lived up to his income.

SIR JOHN.

Worthy man ! I could jump up to the ceiling ! I am the happiest father-in-law in the three kingdoms.—And that's my sister's knock too.

CLARA.

Since I was mistaken, cousin,—since, now, you do not need me,—forget what has passed ; my business here is over. Farewell !

EVELYN.

Could you but see my heart at this moment, with what love, what veneration, what anguish it is filled, you would know how little, in the great calamities of

life, fortune is really worth. And must we part now, —*now*, when—when—I never wept before, since my mother died !

Enter LADY FRANKLIN and GEORGINA, followed by BLOUNT, who looks shy and embarrassed.

GRAVES.

Georgina herself—then there's no hope.

SIR JOHN.

What the deuce brings that fellow Blount here ?—
Georgy, my dear Georgy, I want to——

EVELYN.

Stand back, Sir John.

SIR JOHN.

But I must speak a word to her—I want to——

EVELYN.

Stand back, I say,—not a whisper—not a sign. If your daughter is to be my wife, to *her* heart only will I look for a reply to *mine*.

LADY FRANKLIN (*to GEORGINA*).

Speak the truth, niece.

EVELYN.

Georgina, it is true, then, that you trust me with your confidence—your fortune. Is it also true that, when you did so, you believed me ruined ? O, pardon the doubt ! Answer as if your father stood not

there—answer me from that truth the world cannot yet have plucked from your soul—answer as if the woe or weal of a life trembled in the balance—answer as the woman's heart, yet virgin and unpolluted, *should* answer to one who has trusted to it his all !

GEORGINA.

What can he mean ?

SIR JOHN (*making signs*).

She won't look this way, she won't !—hang her !
—HEM !

EVELYN.

You falter. I implore—I adjure you—answer !

LADY FRANKLIN.

The truth !

GEORGINA.

Mr. Evelyn ; your fortune might well dazzle me, as it dazzled others. Believe me, I sincerely pity your reverses.

SIR JOHN.

Good girl : you hear her, Evelyn ?

GEORGINA.

What's money without happiness ?

SIR JOHN.

Clever creature !—noble sentiment !

GEORGINA.

And, so, as our engagement is now annulled,—papa told me so this very morning,—I have promised my hand where I have given my heart—to Sir Frederick Blount.

SIR JOHN.

I told you,—I? No such thing—no such thing: you frighten her out of her wits—she don't know what she's saying.

EVELYN.

Am I awake? But this letter—this letter, received to-day——

LADY FRANKLIN (*looking over the letter*).

Drummond's!—from a banker!

EVELYN.

Read—read.

LADY FRANKLIN.

“Ten thousand pounds just placed to your account—
from the same unknown friend to Alfred Evelyn.”
Oh, Clara, I know now why you went to Drummond's
this morning!

EVELYN.

Clara! What!—and the former one with the same
signature—on the faith of which I pledged my hand
and sacrificed my heart——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Was written under my eyes, and the secret kept
that——

EVELYN.

Look up, look up, Clara—I am free!—I am released! you forgive me?—you love me?—you are mine! We are rich—rich! I can give you fortune, power,—I can devote to you my whole life, thought, heart, soul—I am all yours, Clara—my own—my wife!

SIR JOHN.

A pretty mess you've made of it, to humbug your own father! And you, too, Lady Franklin—I am to thank you for this!

LADY FRANKLIN.

You've to thank me that she's not now on the road to Scotland with Sir Frederick; I chanced on them by the Park just in time to dissuade and save her. But, to do her justice, a hint of your displeasure was sufficient.

GEORGINA (*half sobbing*).

And you know, papa, you said this very morning that poor Frederick had been very ill used, and you would settle it all at the club.

BLOUNT.

Come, Sir John, you can only blame yourself and Evelyn's cunning device! After all I'm no such vewy bad match; and as for the 10,000l.—

EVELYN.

I'll double it. Ah, Sir John, what's money without happiness?

SIR JOHN.

Pshaw—nonsense—stuff! Don't humbug me.

LADY FRANKLIN.

But if you don't consent, she'll have no husband at all.

SIR JOHN.

Hum! there's something in that.—(*Aside to Evelyn*) Double it, will you? Then settle it all *tightly* on her. Well—well—my foible is not avarice. Blount, make her happy. Child, I forgive you.—(*Pinching her arm*) Ugh, you fool!

GRAVES (*to LADY FRANKLIN*).

I'm afraid it's catching. What say you? I feel the symptoms of matrimony creeping all over me. Shall we? eh? Shall we? Frankly, now, frankly——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Frankly, now, there's my hand, on one condition,—that we finish our reel on the wedding-day.

GRAVES.

Accepted. Is it possible? Sainted Maria! thank Heaven you are spared this affliction.

Enter SMOOTH.

SMOOTH.

How d'ye do, Alfred?—I intrude, I fear! Quite a family party.

BLOUNT.

Wish us joy, Smooth—Georgina's mine, and—

SMOOTH.

And our four friends there, apparently have made up another rubber. John, my dear boy, you look as if you had something at stake on the odd trick.

SIR JOHN.

Sir, you're very——Confound the fellow!—and he's a dead shot too!

Enter STOUT and GLOSSMORE hastily, talking with each other.

STOUT.

I'm sure he's of our side; we've all the intelligence.

GLOSSMORE.

I'm sure he's of ours if his fortune is safe, for we've all the property.

STOUT.

Just heard of your return, Evelyn! Congratulate you. The great motion of the session is fixed for Friday. We count on your vote. Progress with the times!

GLOSSMORE.

Preserve the Constitution!

STOUT.

Your money will do wonders for the party!—Advance!

GLOSSMORE.

The party respects men of your property! Stick fast!

EVELYN.

I have the greatest respect, I assure you, for the worthy and intelligent flies upon both sides the wheel ; but whether we go too fast or too slow does not, I fancy, depend so much on the flies as on the Stout Gentleman who sits inside and pays the post-boys. Now all my politics as yet is to consider what's best for the Stout Gentleman !

SMOOTH.

Meaning John Bull. *Ce cher* old John !

STOUT.

I'm as wise as I was before.

GLOSSMORE.

Sir, he's a trimmer !

EVELYN (*to CLARA*).

Ah, Clara, you—you have succeeded where wealth had failed ! You have reconciled me to the world and to mankind. My friends—we must confess it—amidst the humours and the follies, the vanities, deceits, and vices that play their part in the Great Comedy of Life—it is our own fault if we do not find such natures, though rare and few, as redeem the rest, brightening the shadows that are flung from the form and body of the TIME with glimpses of the everlasting holiness of truth and love.

GRAVES.

But for the truth and the love, when found, to make us tolerably happy, we should not be without——

LADY FRANKLIN.

Good health ;

GRAVES.

Good spirits ;

CLARA.

A good heart ;

SMOOTH.

An innocent rubber ;

BLOUNT.

A pwoper degwee of pwudence ;

STOUT.

Enlightened opinions ;

GLOSSMORE.

Constitutional principles ;

SIR JOHN.

Knowledge of the world ;

EVELYN.

And——plenty of Money !

THE END.



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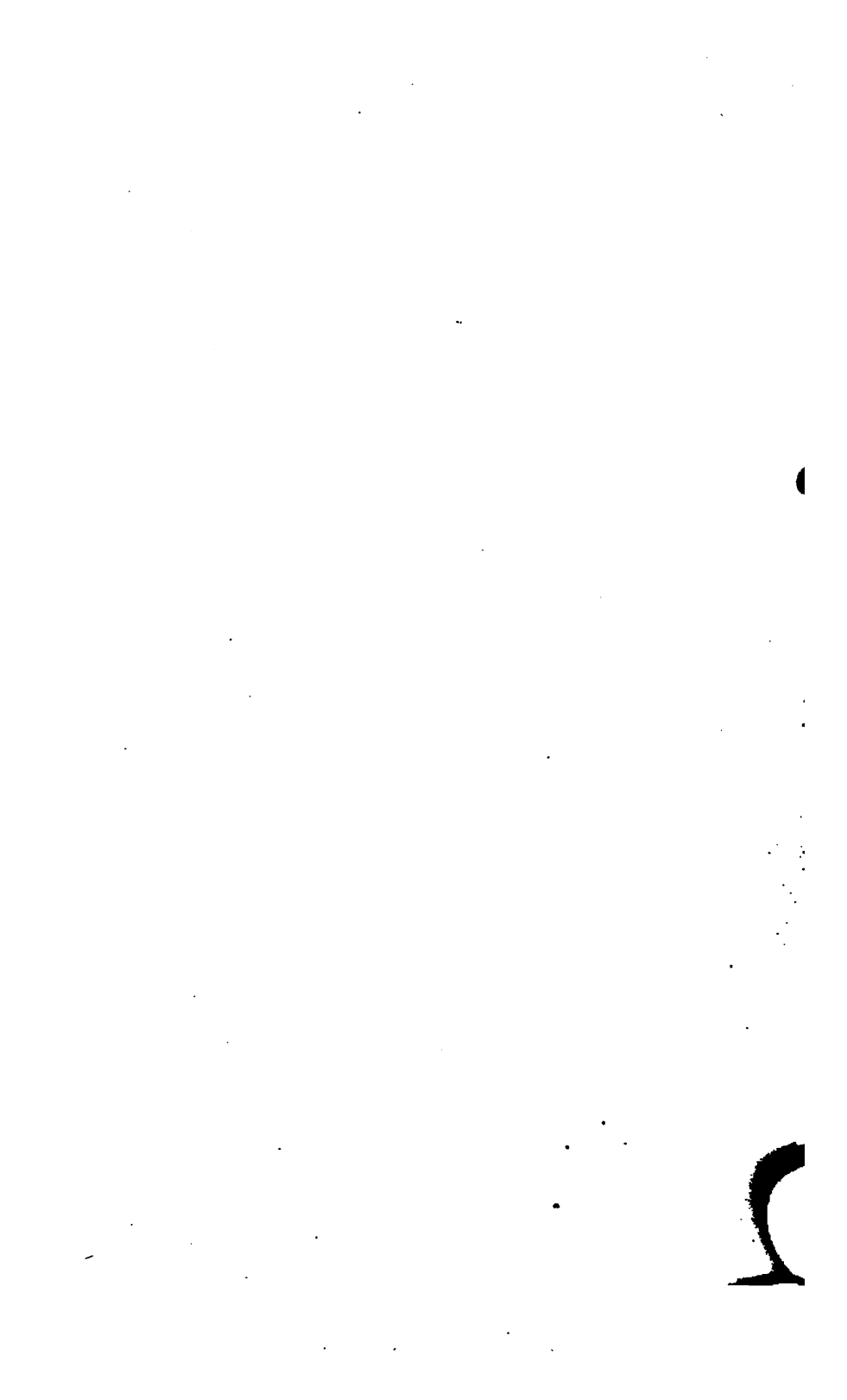
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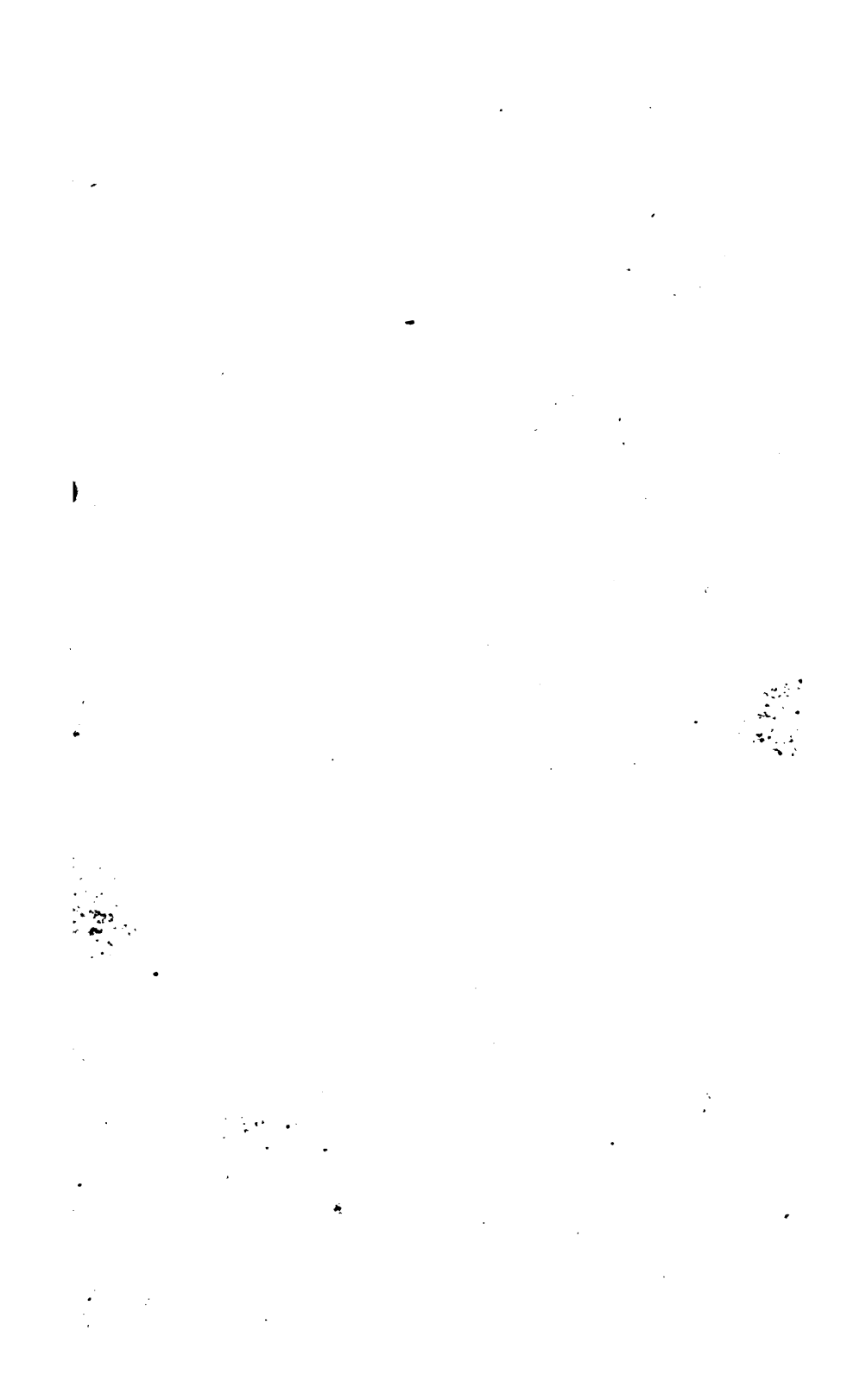
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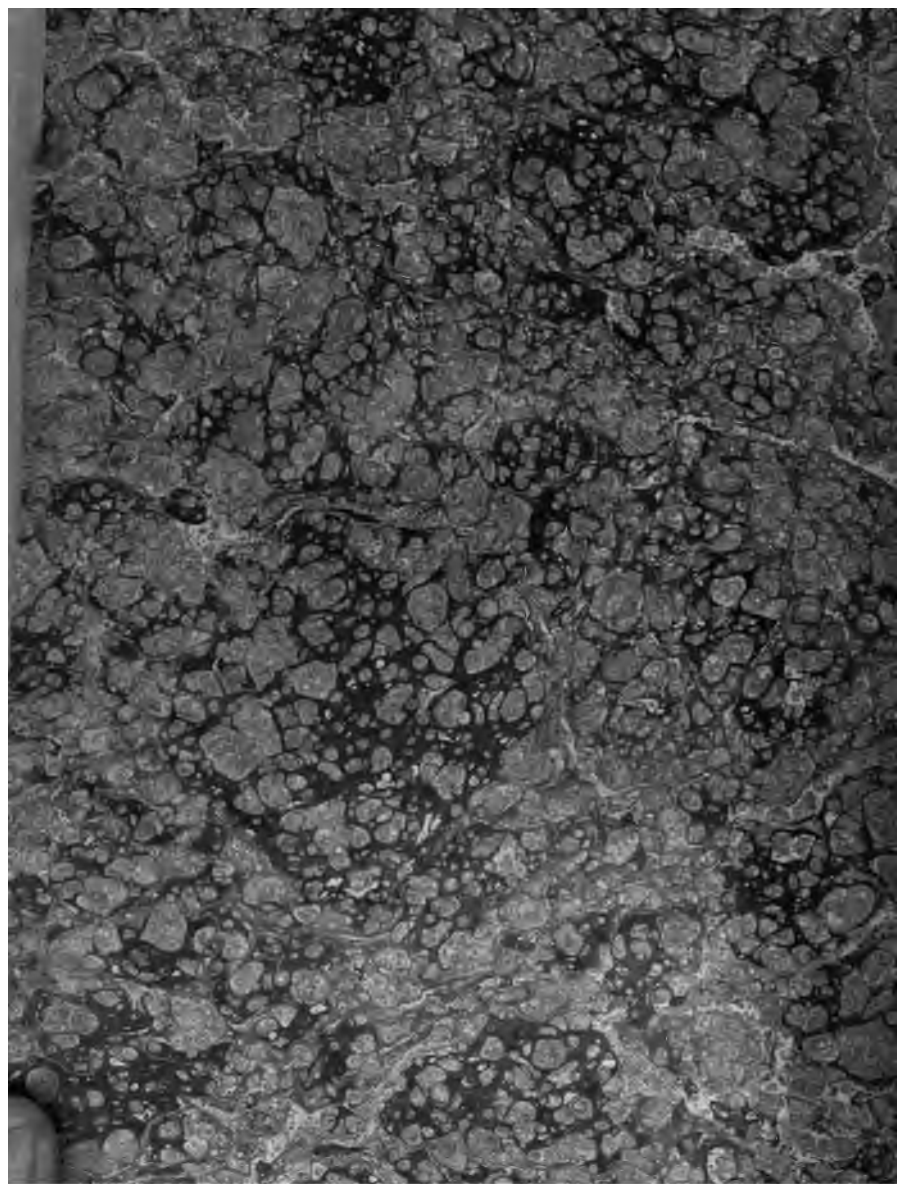
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